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SOUTH DAKOTA

MAGAZINE

March/April 2020
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ARE SOUTH DAKOTANS FUNNY?



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Are South Dakotans Funny?

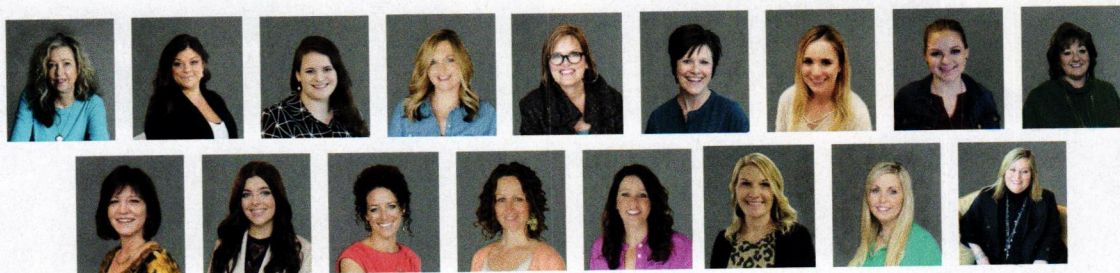
We seek answers from people who take joking seriously.

By Bernie Hunhoff



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OUR COVER: Musician/humorist Gordy Pratt has entertained South Dakotans for decades, so he was naturally one of the people we sought out for our cover story, "Are South Dakotans Funny?"

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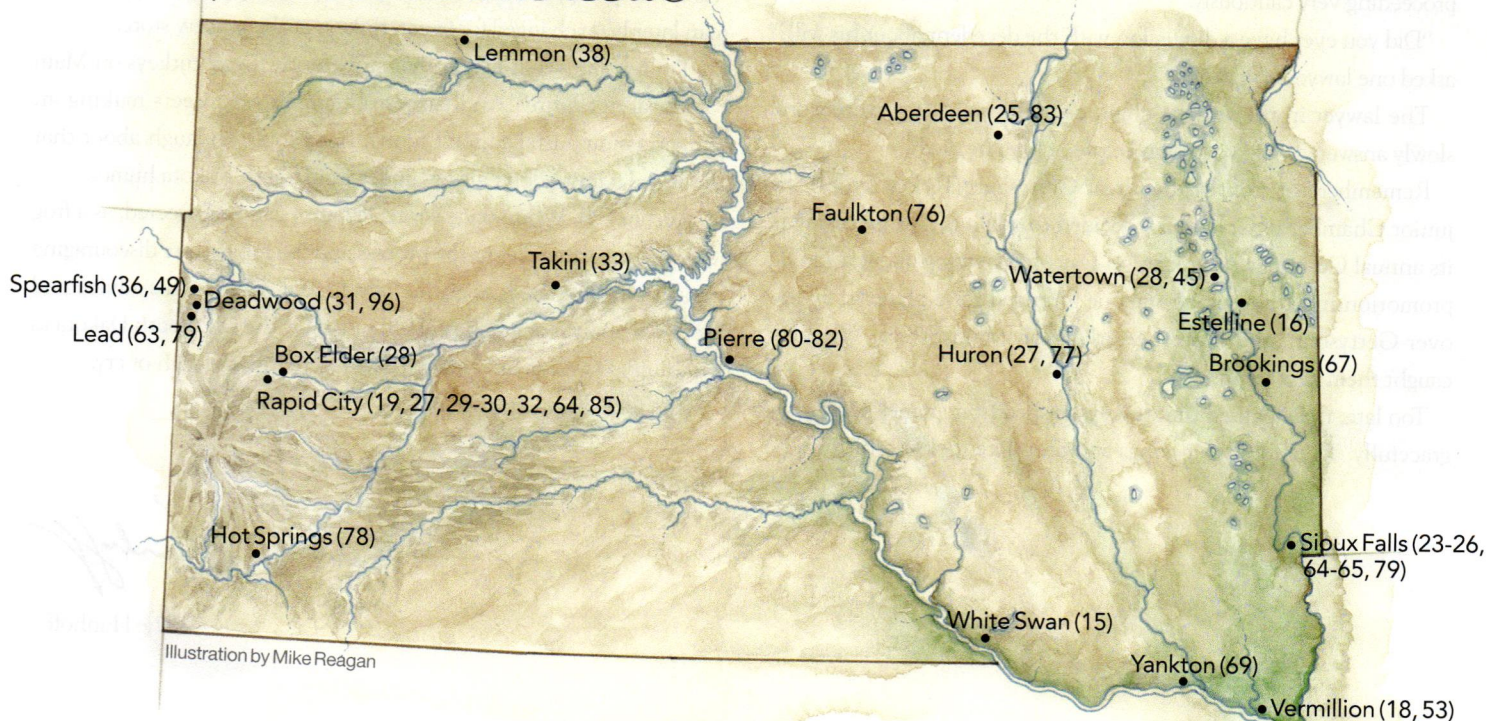
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FROM THE EDITOR

Whatssofunny?

Does life in a place with more cows than people, more cold days than warm, more mountain statues than skyscrapers, give South Dakotans a unique sense of humor?

That's a question we explore in this issue. But of course, this isn't our first foray into South Dakota humor. From our earliest issues, 35 years ago, I've discovered all sorts of fun stories that make me laugh.

Did you hear the one about the veterinarian who claimed that pigs live over 25 years? He said he vaccinated some pigs for a farmer who said he'd pay him when he sold the pigs. "That was 25 years ago," said the vet, "and they must still be alive because he hasn't paid me!"

A while ago we assembled a major feature on South Dakota courthouses and we discovered that every judge and attorney remembers funny stories from working in what might seem like a very serious place. Art Rusch, a retired Vermillion judge who now serves in the state senate, recalled a lawyer who was interrogating another lawyer about a complicated and contested will. Everyone was proceeding very cautiously.

"Did you ever have a discussion with the decedent about his will?" asked one lawyer of another.

The lawyer in the witness chair, carefully weighing every word, slowly answered, "Do you mean before or after he died?"

Remember our story of the Great Gettysburg Turkey Drop? The junior Chamber of Commerce decided to add a turkey giveaway to its annual Customer Appreciation Day after hearing about a similar promotion in Minnesota. Someone arranged for a plane to fly low over Gettysburg and drop the turkeys on Main Street. Whoever caught them kept them.

Too late, they realized that turkeys pushed from planes don't glide gracefully. They fold their wings and drop like rocks — hitting the



Katie Hunhoff: Does our collective sense of humor tell us something about who we are? Even when it involves turkeys and old pigs?

street with enormous splats. Fortunately, no humans were injured but the good people of Gettysburg did not appreciate the event. Later, the Chamber leader called the town that had successfully executed a turkey drop. Apparently, it goes better if you drop ping pong balls that can later be exchanged for frozen turkeys at the grocery store.

I'm not sure what makes that story funny. Dead turkeys on Main Street aren't funny. And earnest Chamber volunteers making an embarrassing mistake aren't funny. But people do laugh about that story, so I admit I don't always understand South Dakota humor.

Author E.B. White once wrote, "Humor can be dissected, as a frog can, but the thing dies in the process and the innards are discouraging to any but the purely scientific mind." We will take his advice and not over-analyze our stories. We'll just show the real South Dakota as truthfully as we can, and let you decide whether to laugh or cry.

The jokes begin on page 20.

Katie Hunhoff

— Katie Hunhoff

ANOTHER GREAT MEMORY FROM DE SMET FARM MUTUAL



OUR FORAY INTO SHEEP LEFT ME WITH GOOD
MEMORIES AND A HEALTHY SUSPICION OF

'CAN'T MISS' DEALS

THE FARM CENSUS says South Dakota only has about 250,000 sheep today. We once had 10 times that number.

Still, there are many farmers and ranchers in De Smet Farm Mutual country with small herds. Every one deserves our respect and admiration because I remember the time Dad bought some bred ewes. He just couldn't resist the low price at the auction barn that day.

"Can't miss with them," he told Mom. "We've got the grass and the price can only go up." He was half right.

Certainly he didn't figure on a truism that all farm bankers know: sheep get sick. At least Dad's did. For awhile, our barn was an animal hospital. Soon, we could diagnose foot

rot, sore mouth, scours and a half dozen other diseases that seem to inflict a critter wearing wool.

When the sheep weren't sick, they were escaping. Our fences were better built for lazy cows.

So I am always pleasantly surprised to see that people still raise sheep — especially with the collapse of wool prices. Even more surprising is that the farms with sheep seem more prosperous than ours ever did.

I doubt Dad and Mom ever made a dollar on sheep, but they bequeathed me a wealth of memories and a suspicious nature for any "can't miss" deals on four legs.

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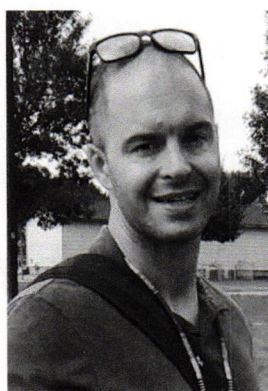
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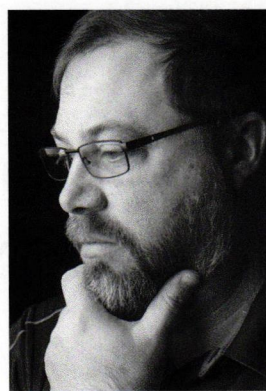
"These fish are territorial predators. They are smart fish. I always say that any size flathead you catch is a win."

—JASON STANSBURY,
catfishing expert — p. 56



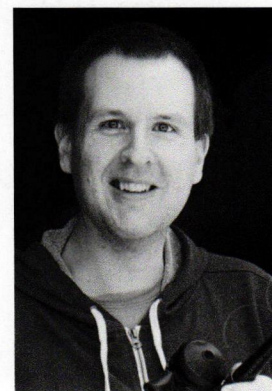
Al Rutherford

The Lakota language surrounded Al Rutherford when he arrived on the Cheyenne River Reservation to teach English at Takini school. In this issue (page 33), Rutherford writes about the challenges of learning Lakota, a task he undertook during four years of teaching there and on the Pine Ridge Reservation. In 2006, he brought students from Takini to participate in the Prairie Winds Writers Conference. There he met the love of his life, Julia, the conference organizer. He now works for Rapid City Area Schools' ELL department as a traveling teacher. He and his wife live high up in the Black Hills.



Christian Begeman

Sioux Falls photographer Christian Begeman, a regular contributor to *South Dakota Magazine*, had the perfect picture to illustrate this issue's story on the cowboy culture of Lemmon (page 38). That was not a surprise. Begeman grew up at Isabel and explores his home country, camera in hand, whenever he has the time. His grandparents once ranched near the Moreau River in Ziebach County. He knows the backroads, bluffs and river valleys of that country like no other photographer.

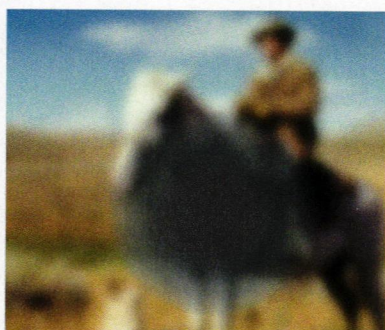


John Andrews

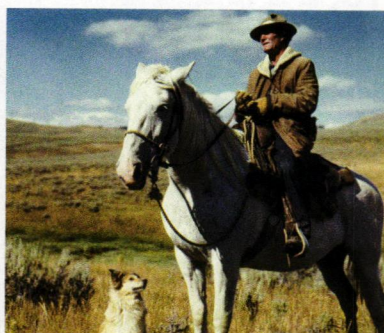
Managing Editor John Andrews's first fishing experience came at age 5 when he reeled a bullhead out of the Lake Norden spillway with his grandparents. Fishing outings have been few and far between since then, but in this issue (page 55) he writes about South Dakota's catfishing culture, which received a boost last year after a 70-year-old state fishing record was voided and anglers rushed to claim it. He lives in Yankton, a short cast away from great catfishing in the Missouri and James rivers. Maybe he'll dust off his 35-year-old tackle box this summer. "Catfish probably tastes better than bullhead, too," he says.

Advanced Technology Allows Macular Degeneration Patients To See Again

And Allows Many Low Vision Patients To Drive Again



*A scene as it might be viewed
by a person with age-related
macular degeneration*



*Same scene of rancher as
viewed by a person without
macular degeneration*

For many patients with macular degeneration and other vision-related conditions, the loss of central visual detail also signals the end to one of the last bastions of independence, driving. South Dakota optometrist Dr. Robert Stamm is using miniaturized telescopes which are mounted in glasses to help people who have lost vision from macular degeneration and other eye conditions.

"Some of my patients consider me their last chance for people who have vision loss," said Dr. Stamm, one of only a few doctors in the world

who specializes in fitting bioptic telescopes to help those who have lost vision due to macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy and other eye diseases.

Imagine a pair of glasses that can improve your vision enough to change your life. Bioptic telescopes may be the breakthrough in optical technology that will give you back your independence. Patients with vision in the 20/200 range can many times be improved to 20/50.

Bioptic telescopes treat both dry and wet forms of macular degeneration as well as other

vision limiting conditions.

While there is currently no cure, promising research is being done on many fronts. "My job is to figure out everything and anything possible to keep a person functioning," says Dr. Stamm. "Even if it's driving."

"The major benefit of the bioptic telescope is that the lens automatically focuses on whatever you're looking at," said Dr. Stamm. "It's like a self-focusing camera, but much more precise."


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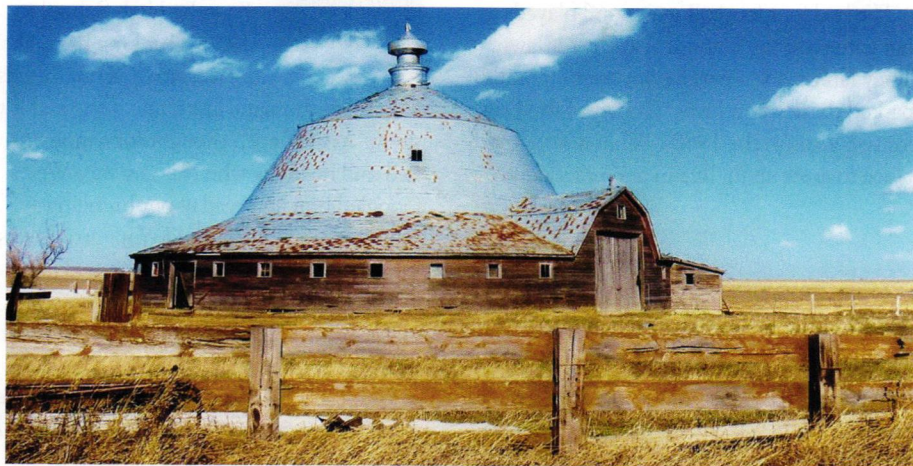
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Stu Surma of Java submitted this photo of the Sloat Barn near Gettysburg, featured in our Jan/Feb '20 story titled, "Retracing Roads to Our Round Barns." Our readers love South Dakota's round barns.

ROUND IN RENNER

The Renner barn featured in the round barn article ("Retracing Roads to Our Round Barns," Jan/Feb '20) was built by my great-great-grandparents, Alfred and Marit Christensen, in 1917, with the help of many relatives. They felt that round barns were stronger and cheaper to build. The process involved hundreds of concrete blocks, using sand and clay found on the homestead. An interior silo was built, then concrete block walls were erected to surround it. Inside, dairy cows would stand in a circle facing the silo for milking and feeding.

Sharon Cross Schmidt
Webster, S.D.

MOVING THE BARN

Your January/February issue was one of the best, and not just because our Little Village Farm was included ("Retracing Roads to Our Round Barns"). Moving our round barn was a trick. Clellan Becker, the Marion house mover, said he could move it if I could figure out how to lift it. We cut, heated, bent and drilled 3-inch heavy angle irons, lag bolting them to every fourth stud, then lifted under these, plus lagging on to the four uprights. The uprights had to land just right, as we had poured piers for them, so we put paint spots on the sill and on the round foundation. The spots had to land on

top of each other. Becker's man drove in, backed up and landed right on the first try.

Since Bernie Hunhoff was first here 25 years ago, we have gathered considerably more farm caps. Most of the credit belongs to my wife, Joan. She now has around 10,000 in three barns. Our latest addition is a late 1800s one-room school. It was "free," so \$6,000 later it is moved, up on a foundation, has eight new windows and two coats of paint applied by me when it finally stopped raining last fall.

Jim Lacey
Trent, S.D.

LUNAR LEGACY

I love "Seasons of the Moon" by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve (Jan/Feb '20). Her grandfather has passed a wonderful legacy to her and she wears the mantle well. Christian Begeman's photos add to the article.

Shirley Johnson
Princeton, Ill.

TOBEY'S TOWN

I absolutely loved the article about Vienna ("Welcome to Vienna," Jan/Feb '20). The amazing Delmar Tobey is my grandfather. He would like you to know that even though he frequents the coffee at the Vienna post office (as we all do when we are

DIY DREAM BARN

I enjoyed the interesting article on round barns ("Retracing Roads to Our Round Barns," Jan/Feb '20) and hope to visit several of the barns listed. Growing up on a farm near Tyndall, I have long been drawn to barns of all kinds, but round barns always seemed especially intriguing.

I have built some sort of "barn" structure wherever we lived — from garden shed-sized to fairly large garage/shop buildings, all with gambrel roofs. About seven years ago I began planning my dream barn: a 16-sided structure approximately 66 feet in diameter. I always included our six children in these building projects when they were old enough. For this project, our youngest son was the only one still living at home, so it was "now or never" if I wanted any help. Together we planted poles and raised rafters to complete the building in about a year.

Joel Finck
Tabor, S.D.



in town), he has always been a Willow Lake farmer. Apparently, there is a big difference!

*Tami Bothwell
Windsor, Colo.*

FAMILIAR FACE

I smiled when I read that Dennis Daugaard was one of the least pretentious governors in the history of our state ("Too Long in the Sun," Jan/Feb '20). I first met Daugaard in 2003 when he was seated with us at a fundraising dinner at Mount Rushmore. During the jovial dinner table discussion, I found him to be a likable and modest gentleman. When the emcee introduced our speaker for the evening as the executive director of Children's Home Society, Daugaard rose and approached the lectern. He began by saying, "I know that many of you might not recognize me, but I am blessed to serve as the lieutenant governor of the great state of South Dakota."

"My goodness," I exclaimed to my wife, "I thought the guy looked familiar!"

*Jeff Bailie
Rapid City, S.D.*

CAPITOL RIDERS

I was intrigued by the De Smet Farm Mutual Insurance Company ad about a visit to Pierre (Jan/Feb '20). My folks moved to Pierre in March 1940 and we lived at 421 W. Capitol St., until March 1941. I was in fifth grade at Lincoln Grade School, two blocks from the house. My friends and I rode bikes all over, even going in the Capitol's west door and riding the full block to the east door and back. With today's forensics we could

have been tracked down by the imprints our tires made on the marble hallway. But the next day at school, Miss Hinkel, my teacher, announced, "There will be no more bike riding in the Capitol."

We had four football teams and played our games on the Capitol's northwest lawn. They later made a parking lot out of it, and I parked there when I was "Doctor of the Day" for two years in the 1980s. What a wonderful place to grow up in, live in and practice.

*Dr. Jack Berry
Mitchell, S.D.*

ALCESTER'S RECORD

At the end of your article about the Sturgis losing streak ("Sweet Victory at Last," Nov/Dec '19) there was a reference to Alcester High School's losing streak from 1961-1970. I played football at Alcester and graduated in May 1963. In fall 1962, we won three games. After the final game of the '62 season, the streak began. I'm not sure of the total number of losses, but I saw Alcester's next win in the fall of 1970. My cousins, Arlo, Eldean and Eldon Lykken played in that game.

The story indicated this was a 9-man football record. We played 11-man football in 1962 and it was also 11-man in 1970.

*Chuck Tiltrum
Aurora, S.D.*

YOUNG SMITH

I read "Dakota's Doolittle Raiders" (Nov/Dec '19) with great interest. This past July, I was helping my in-laws move to assisted living. While going through some old photographs



that once belonged to dear family friends, I found the senior picture of a Donald Gregory Smith that graduated from Belle Fourche High School in 1936. Thinking he might be a relative of our friends,

who share the same last name, I showed it to them. Arlyn Smith thought for a moment and said he knew who this guy was. We Googled him and read about his being a pilot in the Doolittle Raid. Your article was informative and timely since we had just learned of his heroism. I plan to give the picture and a copy of that issue to our local museum in Oldham.

*Cathy S. Folsland
Oldham, S.D.*

ASYLUM HISTORY

Thank you for featuring the history of the Hiawatha Indian Insane Asylum ("Healing at Hiawatha," Nov/Dec '19). As Keepers of the Canton Native Asylum Story and South Dakota Humanities Council Scholars, Yankton Sioux artist Jerry Fogg and I give presentations about the asylum across our state, so I would like to clarify some points.

The Keepers have no evidence that Oscar Gifford engaged in affairs with staff while he was superintendent of the asylum (1901-1908). He was forced to resign after staff filed complaints with the federal government about his mistreatment of inmates.

From the beginning of Superintendent Harry Hummer's tenure (1908-1933), his treatment of staff and inmates was abusive and inhumane. In 1914 and 1915, current

FROM OUR READERS

I was sad to learn that legendary basketball coach Q.C. Miles died in 2018 in Watertown. I still smile when I remember that he called our Waubay Dragons "the weakest team" in the 1955 state basketball tournament. That was the season when his Gann Valley Buffaloes and their star player Ray Deloria came from nowhere and made quite a Cinderella run until we beat them 65-59 in the first round of the State B. Hard to believe that it was 65 years ago. Here's a photo from our yearbook of the Waubay Dragons. We also lost our wonderful coach, Lou Graslie, and several players on our team.

Dick Schultz — Helena, Mont.



and former employees filed complaints regarding Hummer's inappropriate conduct with female staff. Some of these incidents reportedly occurred when Hummer sent his wife to the Southwest to "evaluate" potential inmates. Hummer was cleared of the charges.

Dr. John Turner (1902–1908) resigned after Harry Hummer became superintendent, and his career with the Indian Health Service was destroyed by Hummer and his political allies. He served as Canton's much-loved community doctor for the rest of his life. A second doctor, Leonidas Hardin, was employed in 1908 but left a few months later, after filing at least one complaint about Hummer. He then moved to Flandreau where he and his wife donated land for a park for all children — Native and non-Native.

The Keepers would like to give credit to the people who have helped recover the asylum's history. Edith Nelson and other librarians in Canton have provided invaluable information and carefully cared for inmates' items. Joyce Miles, Janet Miles, Rose Ripka, Corky Minor and other historians have spent hours digging through city records, speaking with community members and visiting cemeteries and other sites. The late Hill brothers, Manfred and Charles, and Justin Holter provided us with eyewitness accounts of the time they spent visiting the asylum as children. Ojibwe historian J. Kay Davis, a historical genealogist for Native nations in the United States, has also been a great inspiration. Other researchers have given us documents from archives that we do not have the time or funding to visit, and the Dakota State University archive team hopes to create a single digital archive for the asylum.

*Anne Dilenschneider
Sioux Falls, S.D.*

Editor's Note: We recently learned that the film *Official Secrets*, based on a book by Hill City writer Marcia Donnan Mitchell, will not be appearing at the Black Hills Film Festival Feb. 20–25 (Traveler, Jan/Feb '20). To view the festival schedule, visit BlackHillsFilmFestival.org.

SEND US YOUR COMMENTS

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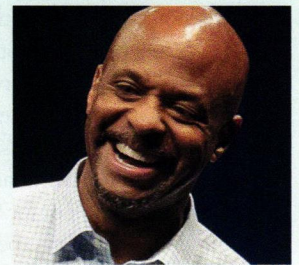
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DAKOTIANA

Observations and Discoveries of Life in South Dakota



Bernie Hunhoff photos



White Swan Floods Again ... The original White Swan townsite has been submerged beneath Lake Francis Case since 1952, buried by the waters of Fort Randall Dam. Before the dam was closed, the federal government moved people and buildings — including the 1870 St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church (left) — eastward to higher ground. It wasn't high enough. White Swan and nearby Lake Andes fought flood waters throughout 2019, beginning with a bomb cyclone in March and exacerbated by an 11-inch rain in September. Shelly Saunsoci (pictured with her daughter Chloe and husband Chris) and other volunteers oversaw a food kitchen for beleaguered families through the winter, all the while hoping and praying for a return to normal moisture in 2020.

THE TIN MAN OF ESTELLINE

Before plastic and stainless steel, there was tin. In the 18th and 19th centuries, lightweight, rust-resistant tinplate was the material of choice for common items like cups, plates and buckets. At Dakota Tinworks of Estelline, former history professor Karl Schmidt is reviving this old craft, replicating objects a century old (or more) and using his own designs to create anything from cookware to lanterns to Christmas ornaments.

Schmidt first encountered tinsmithing at an arts festival in 2004. After he and his wife, Nadine, and their sons, Will and Henry, attended a tinsmithing workshop at the Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer in Grand Island, Nebraska, the whole family was hooked. He launched his business in 2016.

Unlike blacksmiths, tinsmiths do not require a forge, because tin melts at the relatively low temperature of 450 degrees Fahrenheit. Instead, Schmidt shapes pieces of flat tinplate by hand or with authentic 19th-century tinsmithing tools that he has refurbished,



using solder to join two pieces of metal together.

To ensure that the details of his reproductions are correct, Schmidt often buys antique tin items as guides. "Not only can I then take accurate measurements, but I'm also able to examine, close up, how the pieces

are constructed, and learn indirectly from tinsmiths of the past," he says.

Schmidt demonstrates his craft at historic reenactments around the region, and is currently creating prizes for the Cookie Cutter Collectors Club's national convention and replicating a rare 19th-century cooking device held at the Science Museum of London. "It may be the only one of its kind in a museum today," Schmidt says.

OVERHEARD IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Yankton Police Chief John Harris grew up on a Wyoming ranch and studied agriculture before embarking on a law enforcement career. Friends who know his background will sometimes ask for gardening advice. "The other day someone asked me if it would help if they used horse manure on their strawberries," he says. "I told them I wasn't sure — but personally I prefer whipped cream."

HISTORIC DATES

IN SOUTH DAKOTA

BIRTH OF THE BADLANDS

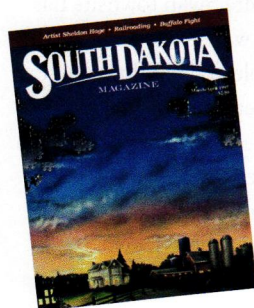
March 4, 1929 ... President Calvin Coolidge signed a law authorizing the creation of the Badlands National Monument.

MELLETT APPOINTED

March 11, 1889 ... Arthur C. Mellette of Watertown, Dakota Territory's last governor, was appointed by President Benjamin Harrison. A vigorous booster of statehood, Mellette also served as South Dakota's first governor.

SINK OR SWIM

April 15, 1912 ... Onida chiropractor Oscar "Doc" Hedman survived the sinking of the ocean liner *Titanic*, but Langford native Ole Olson drowned, along with more than 1,500 others.



BEST QUOTE 25 YEARS AGO

"People who really are old-fashioned — those who drive hay-burning cars, for instance — would rather die than admit they are old-fashioned."

— Roger Holtzmann, in our March/April 1995 issue.

SOUTH DAKOTA TRIVIA

Think you know South Dakota? Test your knowledge with this quiz. Answers can be found on page 19.

1 >> What town is home to an African Methodist Episcopal church built in 1885 by former slaves?

2 >> Who was the first South Dakotan to be inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame?



3 >> What is South Dakota's state fossil?

4 >> Where will you find colonies of white prairie dogs?

5 >> When did an expedition led by George Custer discover gold in the Black Hills?



Bernie Huntzoff

6 >> WHERE WILL YOU FIND THIS BIKE SCULPTURE?

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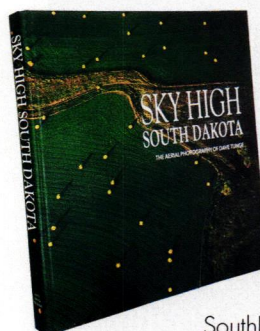
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SOUTH DAKOTA FROM ABOVE

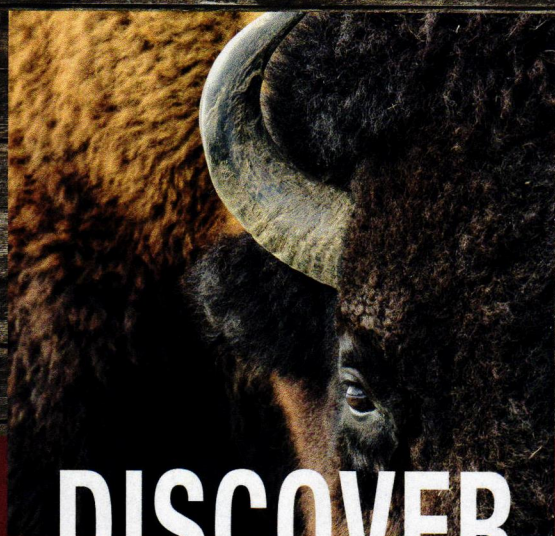


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Vermillion's Stitch in Time

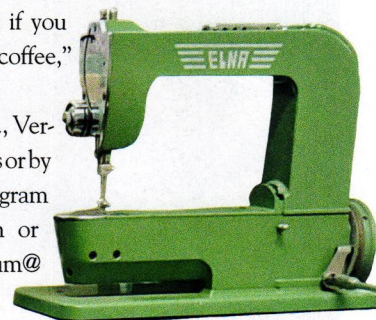
When Sally Abild's husband, Dick, told her she had to do something with her collection of 18 antique sewing machines, she invited her four sisters, all sewers, to come and play with them. Together, they realized that other women might enjoy the chance to tinker around, and the Farmers' Daughters' Sewing Museum was born. It opened in September 2017.

Housed in an old milking barn and an adjoining annex near Vermillion, the museum contains 100 to 120 machines. Many rarer models were collected by Abild's sisters in New Jersey, Colorado and Texas. The displays follow sewing machine history, from early models by Howe, Singer, Grover & Baker and Wheeler & Wilson to modern machines that cater to off-the-grid sewers.

Due to their availability, Singers dominate the collection. But machines from other countries are also included, like a sturdy Swiss Elna from the 1940s which was designed to be "a machine people could throw into its container and run with" during wartime. One museum visitor was stunned when she saw the Elna's carrying case, remembering, "My mother left me a container that looked exactly like that. For years I wouldn't open it because I thought it was ammunition."

Abild jokes that the museum's name should be changed — her husband led the building renovation, her brothers-in-law have been preparing the machines for hands-on experimentation and her 97-year-old mother, Evelyn Hanson, makes cookies for visitors. "She's from the old school and believes that if you have guests, you have food and coffee," Abild says.

The museum at 31417 Bluff Rd., Vermillion, is open during open houses or by appointment. Find them on Instagram at @thefarmersdaughtersmuseum or email thefarmersdaughtersmuseum@gmail.com.



TOP 7

Things Debra Jensen Loves About South Dakota

Debra Jensen lives in Rapid City. She attended the South Dakota School of Mines and Black Hills State before beginning her broadcasting career, working at KEVN-TV, KKLS Radio and KOTA Radio. In 2002, Jensen and her husband, Jack, purchased Black Hills Bagels. She serves on the board of South Dakota Retailers and the Rapid City Chamber of Commerce, and is president of the Mount Rushmore Road Group and secretary for Scenic Rapid City.



Bernie Hunhoff

Student of Skiing

I took skiing for a class credit in college. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the class would ski for three hours and then head to the Old Style in Deadwood for "study hall."

Family Dining

The Powder House, a 60-year-old cozy, rustic log restaurant in Keystone, serves incredible food from walleye to Italian ... and it's owned by my cousins. (If you're from South Dakota, we could be related.)

Capitol Love

I was working for KKLS when I saw the Capitol for the first time, and I loved everything about it – the copper dome, the columns, the landscaping, the marble and granite, the rotunda and even the tiny passageways leading from the House and Senate. Every year my husband and I stop and admire the building and what it stands for.

Best Breakfast

A Black Hills Bagels vanilla nut bagel soaked

overnight in an egg/milk batter with cinnamon and a little shot of Grand Marnier makes the best French toast ever. I grill it and serve with real maple syrup, fresh fruit and espresso.

Spiritual Experience

I often come to Our Lady of the Black Hills at Piedmont feeling stressed, but I leave calmer and uplifted. As my father-in-law used to say, "We get our batteries recharged!"

The Four Seasons

I love the miles of sweet clover, baby lambs and calves in the spring, the fields of wheat just before harvest, late summer's sunflowers and snow-covered pine and spruce trees in winter.

Chilly Waters

My husband and I loved waterskiing at Pactola during the 1990s. It was so cold, even in mid-summer, but the waterskiing was great – especially after 3 p.m. when the winds would usually die down.

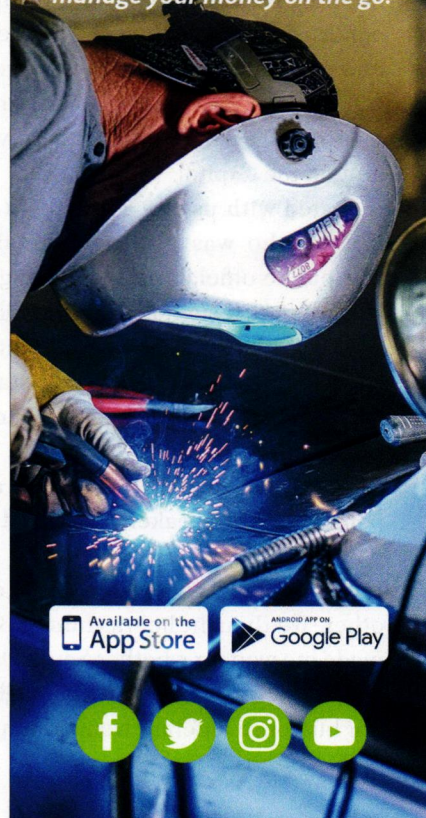
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WHAT MAKES US LAUGH?

Do South Dakotans have a unique sense of humor? We sought answers from people who take jokes seriously — our professional comedians.

Story by **BERNIE HUNHOFF**

I WAS SEATED WITH A GROUP of South Dakota state legislators at a big, round table at the Ramkota Conference Center in Pierre, nibbling on cheesecake and drinking coffee while a local master of ceremonies cracked jokes about the governor's frugality, the lieutenant governor's mustache and goose poop on the sidewalks around the Capitol.

Seated with us was a Canadian politician who was visiting lawmakers and public officials and observing our style of prairie democracy. Though we were busy laughing, I noticed that the Canadian was stone-faced, and staring around the big dining hall with a curious look.

Finally, he leaned toward us and, pointing to the speaker, whispered earnestly, "Is he funny?"

"Yeah," we answered, looking at each other. We thought he was funny. But it made me wonder whether South Dakotans are funny. What makes us laugh? Is our humor so different from other parts of the country?

Who better to ask than the experts — the courageous men and women who stand up on a stage and try to make us laugh. They work hard at humor, and they think about it all the time. Accompanying this story are some profiles of our comedians and their responses to our serious questions.

While searching for funny people, we discovered that there's a serious comedy scene in South Dakota, though it's almost an underground culture that meets in pizzerias, small town bars and even the back room of a bookstore.

Rapid City and Sioux Falls are especially rife with stand-up comedians and clubs that support comedy. In Sioux Falls, the hub for humor is Boss' Comedy Club in Boss' Pizza and Chicken on busy Minnesota Avenue. For years, the pizzeria has provided a room near the soda fountain for Wednesday night open mics and other events. On an average night, 10 or more area comics will jump on stage to test their jokes before a cheering audience that often includes moms, spouses and friends, some laugh-

ing while enjoying pepperoni and beer.

Many of the jokes at Boss' are rooted in South Dakota life — playing basketball, suffering the weather, enduring family holidays and putting in a day's work. Comedians throughout the state agree that South Dakotans have a healthy sense of humor, one that's easily ignited by local and regional topics and themes. We like to laugh at the neighbors, but we're not too proud to laugh at ourselves.

One comic tells a story about some Texas sportsmen who heard about ice fishing in the Dakotas. The Texans drove a thousand miles to Yankton and walked out on frozen Lewis and Clark Lake with their poles. They grew discouraged after an hour without a bite. However, they could see that some anglers were catching fish across the lake, so one of the Texans volunteered to walk over and see how they were doing it.

As soon as he neared the other fishermen, he threw up his arms in wonderment and came running back to his



Dalyce Dykhous Sellers
and Gordy Pratt are regular
performers at the High Plains
Heritage Center in Spearfish.

friends, hollering, “They cut a HOLE in the ice!”

That joke probably wouldn’t be very funny in Texas, or even Oklahoma. But they love it in Yankton — even Dallas Cowboys fans.

Despite the homogenization of American culture that has occurred thanks to mass media, commercialization and McDonaldization, we still have 50 states, each with its own peculiarities and pecadilloes, and our surviving differences are often reflected in what makes us laugh.

Bigness is big for Alaskans and Texans. New Englanders are famous for stubbornness and a suspicion of strangers. Southerners laugh about hunting dogs, death and nostalgia. New Yorkers have an urban wit and Californians love practical jokes.

Some think Midwesterners are generally too kind and modest to have a particular brand of humor, though Garrison Keillor made a career of laughing at Minnesota niceness. Still, his hilarious Lake Wobegon stories — where all the women are strong, all the men are good-looking, and all the children are above average —

while funny enough, never really resonated as South Dakota stories.

Maybe South Dakota is far enough west of Lake Wobegon — and separated further by rivers, mountains, badlands and cornfields from other states and regions — to have its own, unique sense of humor. For instance, who but a South Dakotan would joke that we can’t have a professional football team, “because then Minnesota would want one!”

Yes, we like to laugh about neighboring states. Motorists who fail the Iowa driver’s exam are given blue license plates. The “N” on the Nebraska Cornhusker football helmet stands for “Nowledge.” Silly things like that.

But we also insult ourselves with jokes about buffalo, the Crazy Horse mountain carving, the weather, the massive differences between West River and East River (such as the height of the blue-stem prairie grass) and our shared misfortunes, from floods to blizzards.

Gordy Pratt, who has entertained South Dakotans for decades as a musician and comic, quips that the people who stayed in South Dakota are a special breed because, “The cowards never

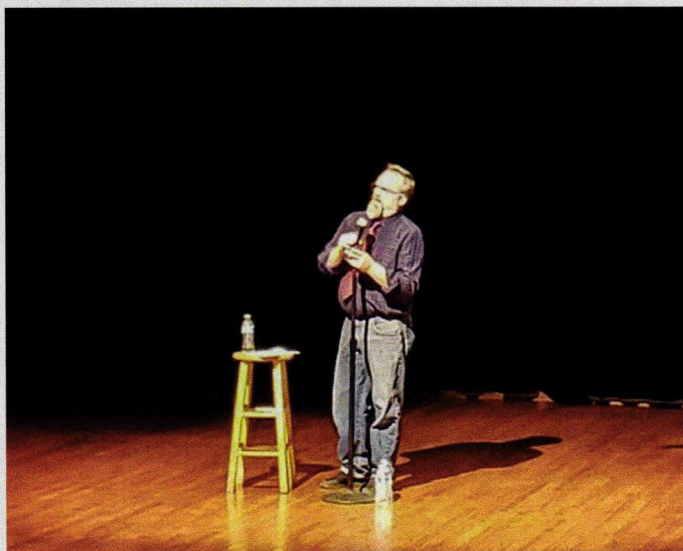
started, the weak died along the way — and the smart moved on to Wyoming.”

Surely, you’ve heard about the old farmer who lived just across the border in North Dakota. One day the county highway superintendent came to his yard and told him that a new road survey showed that his farmhouse was actually in South Dakota. “Thank the Lord!” said the old farmer. “I don’t know if I could take one more winter in North Dakota!”

Our agrarian roots are always good for a laugh. Just ask Skyler Bolks, a Sioux Falls comedian and native. “If you can mention farming, or tractors or detasseling, something that people know and have a common experience with, then that’s good here. Last summer, I planned to spend the summer detasseling ... but I got kicked out of the strip club the first night.”

Seriously, says Bolks, “You probably couldn’t get away with a tractor joke in New York, but they go over here.” And you probably couldn’t do a Sioux City joke in New York, but they are golden in Sioux Falls.

Bolks says comedian Jim Gaffigan entertained in Sioux Falls a few years ago



COMEDY FESTIVALS

MANY SOUTH DAKOTA comedians are very entrepreneurial. They often start and manage local venues and shows. Consequently, it’s not surprising that the state’s two major comedy festivals are both organized by hometown comics.

Sioux Falls comedians started the Sno Jam Comedy Festival in 2016. Held in late January, the event attracts 30 comedians from around the country who perform in both stand-up and themed shows. Profits from Sno Jam go to Special Olympics.

Rapid City’s well-known West Dakota Improv community started the Presidential Comedy Festival in 2019. Though dates are not yet set, it will happen in April.

and simply said, “I came through Sioux City ... I hate that place ...” and before he could finish his joke, the crowd went wild. It wasn’t so much a knock on Sioux City or even the never-ending reconstruction project of Interstate 29 that Sioux Citians like to laugh about. It’s just a South Dakota thing of laughing at the next town down the road.

“If you are in Viborg, you joke about Irene,” explains Luke Johnson, another Sioux Falls comic. “If you are in Vermillion, you tell a Jackrabbit joke.”


Johnson grew up near Volin, where his dad, Lewie, still farms, runs a bulldozer and cracks jokes. “The more people I talk to the more I realize that my childhood was not normal,” he says. “With my dad Lewie and our personal family dynamics, it all makes for great stories and people like to hear about personal experiences.”

He says the tractor jokes that he grew up with are still good for a laugh. “I judge a man not by the color of his skin but by the color of his tractor,” says Johnson, “and the correct color is red, by the way.

“I remember telling that joke in Garretson, where they have a very popular John Deere dealer, and the crowd was not happy with me. The headliner that night was from the Boston area and he was so amazed at the way the crowd reacted that he commented on it the next night at Boss’ Comedy Club.”

Tractor jokes are akin to knock-knock humor for some South Dakotans. Tractors are like tomatoes — you keep the red ones and throw away the green. Oh, you have a red tractor — you must be a good mechanic. Back and forth we go.

If only our politics were as humorous. Before the Canadian politician left Pierre, the state legislators at our table asked him what he thought of our legislative process. He said the Canadian parliament is more boisterous and animated than the debates he observed in the South Dakota State Senate.

“Here your legislature is more like ... like a library,” he said. And then he laughed. But it wasn’t funny. 



THE WORLD’S ONLY DETASSELING JOKE

SKYLER BOLKS
Sioux Falls

BACKGROUND: Bolks began to create jokes as a student at Washington High School in Sioux Falls. He studied writing at Mount Marty College in Yankton. He won a 2018 “Roast of South Dakota” event with lines like this: “South Dakota, of course, is known for faces on a rock, the corn gym and getting drunk in a field playing with guns.” He runs a comedy show at the Bonus Round Bar on South Cliff Avenue in Sioux Falls on the last Sunday of every month. “Free pinball until the show begins,” he promises.

WHAT’S FUNNY? “South Dakotans like stories about our common experience. Often you’re playing small towns, so if you can mention farming, tractors — something they all share — that’s good. You probably couldn’t get away with tractor jokes in New York City.”

A FAVORITE: “I planned to spend the summer detasseling ... but I got kicked out of the strip club the first night.”

SON OF A BULLDOZER DAD



LUKE JOHNSON • Sioux Falls

BACKGROUND: Johnson grew up near Volin, the son of a fun-loving farmer (Lewie) who drives a bulldozer and is famous for wisecracks. Luke majored in mass comm and English at USD and always loved comedy but didn't try standup until he moved to Sioux Falls four years ago, where he works at World Market. He hosts an open mic night for comedians at the Full Circle Book Coop on 10th Street in Sioux Falls monthly.

WHAT'S FUNNY TO SOUTH DAKOTANS? "The more people I talk to the more I realize that my childhood was interesting and unusual, and that people like

to hear your personal experiences. And they like 'dad jokes' today — jokes your dad would tell like, 'Make me a sandwich.' — 'OK, you are a sandwich.'"

A FAVORITE: "South Dakota is a lot like Texas with a mute button. Texans will tell you how great they are. South Dakotans just expect you to know."

ANOTHER FAVORITE: "I had to return some defective bird seed. I did everything right. I planted it, watered it every day ... still no birds."



BELLY FLOPS *and* OTHER PAINS

NATHAN HULTS
Sioux Falls

BACKGROUND: A native Minnesotan, Hults spent summers with grandparents near Gary. He did comedy improv in high school, and studied at Augustana University. Today he works at Boss' Pizza and Chicken, and runs Boss' Comedy Club, with open mic shows every Wednesday and guest comics on Fridays and Saturdays.

WHAT'S FUNNY? "Pain works really well. Getting kicked in the nuts. Flops. Belly flops. We've all experienced such pains. But I stay away from politics. These days it bums everybody out. You don't sell any shirts. Even if they agree with you, they're mad that the other people don't."

A FAVORITE: "I think my favorite feature is my chin ... the third one, it only comes out on special occasions."

RELIGION *and* POLITICS

LESLIE BING
Aberdeen

BACKGROUND: Leslie Barbour (Bing's a stage name) was born and raised in Boise, Idaho. She began stand-up comedy while living in Texas about 12 years ago. Today she teaches STEM classes to youth in Aberdeen and is a regular performer at Slackers, a local comedy club.

WHAT'S FUNNY? "I was raised in a really religious home so I can talk about my childhood and get a lot of laughs. People in Aberdeen can identify with that. I talk a lot about my cats. There was one week where everybody was making jokes about being on meth, but we seem to have moved past that. Political humor can be difficult these days. It's like the politicians are too easy of a target. If you do political jokes you need to make sure you push yourself. You can't just call the president a buffoon. It still needs to be quality humor."

A FAVORITE: "I know I am getting used to Aberdeen ... because if I see somebody driving over 35 miles per hour I am alarmed."

ANOTHER FAVORITE: "I'm raising my cats like I was raised. I was home-schooled ... so they're indoor cats."



Tracy Vogel

'KEVIN FROM HY-VEE' HUMOR

ZACH DRESCH
Sioux Falls

BACKGROUND: Dresch grew up in Sioux Falls in a family of professional musicians and still plays drums in a band. "Music and performing was just a natural part of life," he says. He experimented with comedy as a student at O'Gorman High School. "I would get up in the middle of the cafeteria every day. Everyone would get quiet and I

would tell one joke and sit down. Even the teachers loved it. It all started in the O'Gorman cafeteria."

WHAT'S FUNNY? "I work at Hy-Vee full-time as the wine and spirits clerk, so I've started this routine about 'Kevin from Hy-Vee,' who actually does exist. Sometimes I try out new material on customers at the store. If they don't laugh it doesn't make it to open mic night."

A FAVORITE: "I am the Flu Bug guy on the state health department commercials [it's true, he is]. People recognize me from the billboards and commercials. This guy walks up to me while I'm washing my hands in a public bathroom and he says, 'You are washing your hands? The Flu Bug wouldn't do that!' So I coughed in his face."

ANOTHER FAVORITE: "What's a taxidermist's favorite pizza? Stuffed crust."

ANOTHER FAVORITE: "Someone crashed into the Minervas building downtown ... when asked how it happened he said driving downtown 'makes me nervous.'"



RAPID CITY VS. SIOUX FALLS

ERICA KUHARSKI
Rapid City

BACKGROUND: Kuharski, a Rapid City native, got her start in comedy while studying anthropology at the University of South Dakota. “I was going to sing a song at an open mic night and I kept hearing the comics telling the same jokes so I thought, ‘I can do that.’” And she has been ever since. After school, she returned to Rapid City, became involved in the comedy and improv scene and won the Comedy Showdown. She is currently in Las Vegas, working days as a tour guide and nights as a comedian.

WHAT’S FUNNY? She learned that what draws a laugh can even vary within South Dakota. “In Sioux Falls, there’s a very kind and supportive artsy scene, and even if you’re not funny they’ll say, ‘That’s OK, you’ll get better.’ They’re more conservative in Rapid City, so if you’re not funny they’ll say, ‘What was that?’” Tourism jokes might work in the Black Hills, but not elsewhere. “I have a routine about taking a date to Mount Rushmore, but it didn’t work in Vegas. They just didn’t get what a big deal it is to us.”

A FAVORITE: “Have you noticed no one talks about bestiality? It’s like the sexy elephant in the room.”

ANOTHER FAVORITE: “I’m bipolar so I went to my doctor and asked if my ferret could be a therapy pet and she said, ‘That’s crazy!’”



POLITICS *and* RELIGION ARE TOUCHY TOPICS

DAN BUBLITZ
Huron

BACKGROUND: Bublitz grew up in Huron and Watertown. He is currently based in St. Paul, Minnesota. Following a divorce at age 31, he was determined to try new things. “In high school at Huron, I had what you’d call stage fright. I wanted to overcome that fear, so I decided to prepare myself for open mic at Fat Daddy’s in Sioux Falls. When they called my name, I stood on stage and looked out over that audience ... but then I told a joke and got a laugh and I was on my way. Sioux Falls is a supportive scene for comedians.”

WHAT’S FUNNY? “Well, there’s definitely a difference between regions. I lived in California for a while, and you can do much more liberal humor there. Here it can be pretty touchy politically, the same with religion. It’s easy to offend people with those subjects. But everybody has dates, they get married, they have pets and jobs and problems, so I like to do relatable humor, especially self-deprecating jokes about not having a lot of money or experiencing some bad luck.”

A FAVORITE: “This is from Sioux Falls comedian Adam Wilka, and I laugh every time I hear it. It goes like this: ‘If you are a bird and you fly into a windshield ... you are a dumb bird.’ I know it’s kind of silly but it’s the way he delivers it!”

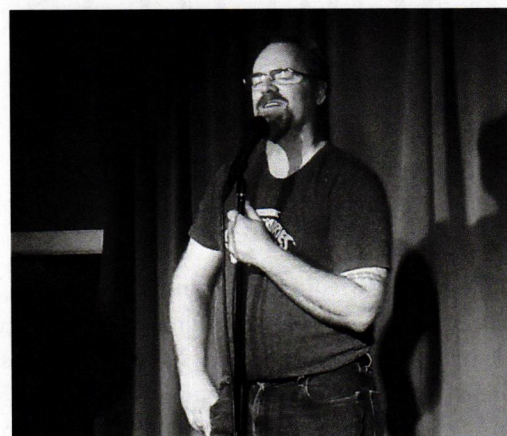
LAKOTA LAUGHTER

TYLER CORBINE
Box Elder

BACKGROUND: The Box Elder native grew up in a family where humor was appreciated, with a father who loved Chevy Chase and Mel Brooks. An IT technician by day, he has become a regular in the Rapid City comedy venues where he likes to do routines with a theme — like his experiences from growing up Catholic, or as a Native American in Rapid City.

WHAT'S FUNNY? “I’ve found that Lakota audiences really enjoy a good laugh at themselves, and the surrealness of life. White audiences find humor in contrasts, in the way they perceive Natives to be versus the way they think they live. For instance, the last joke I wrote was, ‘The judge told me to go to DWI class ... so now I’m qualified to drive drunk.’”

A FAVORITE: “I’m Native American, but I’m not a good, practicing one — less Dances With Wolves and more Sits With Nintendo.”



HECKLERS? ‘WE DON’T DO THAT HERE’

LEE BRUNS
Watertown

BACKGROUND: Bruns was involved in theater as a youth in Watertown, and then became an auctioneer so he is comfortable onstage. “Making people laugh is a valuable skill for an auctioneer,” he says. As the father of a girl with a cognitive disability, he learned that finding humor in life experiences — including the raising of a special needs girl — is a survival skill. He started to jot down jokes as he thought of them and debuted a stand-up act at the Goss Opera House in 2016. He entertains often at Sassy’s on Broadway in Watertown, as well as other clubs in the region.

WHAT'S FUNNY? “A good pun goes over better in South Dakota than most places. What really makes comedy different here is the total lack of hecklers. It is simply not tolerated. There was a show here in Watertown last year and a heckler started shouting back at the comic on stage. The comic stopped the show and said, ‘We don’t do that here.’ The audience applauded briefly and the show continued.”

A FAVORITE: “It’s winter in South Dakota so that starts my winter diet plan. That’s where the driver side window of my truck freezes shut, so I can’t go through the drive-thru at McDonald’s till spring. It saves me about 800 calories a day.”



SOUTH DAKOTANS KNOW THEIR NEWS

DARRYL KNIGHT
Rapid City

BACKGROUND: Knight grew up in Rapid City and left to attend college in Virginia. He began his comedy career in Baltimore, and has performed across the U.S. and Canada for 30 years. He was head writer for the American Comedy Network before returning to the Black Hills in 2016. He now hosts D. Ray's Rock Shop, a popular radio show on 100.3 the Fox in Rapid City, and continues to perform standup, joking about sports, politics and pop culture.

WHAT'S FUNNY? "A lot of time in big cities, especially in New York City, it's a lot of 'make me laugh' mentality. They think they are so sophisticated. People here want to laugh.

They are into it. And South Dakotans know what's going on, they have more knowledge of current events than even people in the D.C. area. I don't know if they are all listening to the tractor radio or what, but they know the news."

A FAVORITE: "You know the difference between New York City and South Dakota? The billboards. In New York there's a billboard on Times Square with a picture of a chicken and it reads, 'He Needs His Wings, You Don't. PETA (People for Ethical Treatment of Animals).' In South Dakota, there are billboards in the cornfields that read, 'Animal Rights Activists Not Welcome Here: Hunting, Fishing & Trapping Is Our Economy.'"



PHEASANTS *and* COWBOYS

**DALYCE DYKHOUSE
SELLERS**
Sundance, Wyo.

BACKGROUND: Dalcyce (pronounced “Dallas”) started playing baritone ukulele as a kindergartener at Rock Rapids, Iowa, and studied voice at the University of South Dakota. To her parents’ dismay, she went on the road, seeking fame and fortune with The Tracterz, a South Dakota new wave band — until she met and married a Texan, Michael Sellers. Eight years ago they moved to a Black Hills ranch near Sundance. In 2017 she teamed up with Gordy Pratt on their Spirit of the American Cowboy show, which they perform across South Dakota.

WHAT’S FUNNY? “South Dakota is unique in that the state sport is rodeo, and that’s also an apt description of the legislative process in Pierre. South Dakota also encourages hunters from around the world to happily shoot the state bird, the ringneck pheasant. Life is different here, and so is our humor.”

A FAVORITE: “You know a cowboy’s mind is dirtier than a cowgirl’s, right? Do you know why that is? It’s because the cowgirl changes hers more often!”

PICKUP TRUCKS *and* COWBOYS WITH NO CATTLE

SHELDON STARR
Rapid City

BACKGROUND: Starr grew up at Oglala on the Pine Ridge Reservation and became serious about comedy when he attended a summer program at the University of South Dakota and entered a joke contest. “I don’t remember the joke but I remember the laughter.” He was hooked. Today he performs at clubs in Rapid City, specializing in one-liners.

WHAT’S FUNNY? “Redneck jokes don’t work so much here, but we do like rural humor — the kind of people who drive trucks, cowboys with no cattle and tourists taking pictures of the presidential statues. You can’t joke about tourists in Denver because they don’t stand out there like they do here. It’s not that much a part of their lives.”

A FAVORITE: “I was at the Safeway in Rapid City. I picked up a cereal box and on the box it said, ACTUAL SIZE. I said, yeah, this box is this big.”





THE COWBOY IN ALL OF US

GORDY PRATT • Deadwood

BACKGROUND: Pratt was born in Texas, though his family roots are in western Colorado. He spent summers at the Black Hills Playhouse as a youth and has been entertaining South Dakotans for more than 30 years. Today he and Dalyce Sellers team up for a comedy and musical show called The Spirit of the American Cowboy.

WHAT'S FUNNY? He finds that South Dakotans like to laugh about the quirks of living on the prairie. For example: "When you stand out on the prairie, everyone can see you," he quips, "but nobody is looking." Tell that joke to an urban crowd and it won't get a laugh. Yet Pratt says, "there is a little cowboy in all of us," so jokes about horses, Deadwood

madams and bad luck are examples of South Dakota-based humor that works across America.

A FAVORITE: South Dakotans who descend from homesteaders are a special breed because, "the cowards never started, the weak died along the way and the smart moved on to Wyoming."

THE MORNING ANIMAL

KEVIN PHILLIPS Rapid City

BACKGROUND: Phillips has entertained Rapid City radio listeners for the past 30 years. Today his program is called the Morning Animal Show (104.7 FM and 920 AM). He has opened comedy shows for Williams and Ree in the Black Hills and was once invited to open for Jay Leno, which is a story in itself.

WHAT'S FUNNY? "South Dakotans

don't take themselves too seriously," he says. "They can take a joke."

A FAVORITE: "The sun is going to burn itself out in 2.6 billion years. Do you know what that means for South Dakota? They're gonna have to finish Crazy Horse in the dark!"



WHERE TO CHEER *and* LAUGH?

Erica Kuharski says South Dakota's comedy scene is supportive and encouraging — both the clubs and the audiences. "In Las Vegas, nobody is really your friend," she says. "It's just, 'what can you do for them.' In South Dakota, everyone is cheering for you." Here are venues where you can cheer for comedy.



ABERDEEN: Slackers, 319 Main St., open mic nights on last Sunday of every month at 8 p.m. 262-4440.

KEYSTONE: Red Garter Saloon, 124 Winter St., local comedian and singer Jerry Allen does history and comedy shows throughout the afternoons and performs nightly (Tuesdays thru Saturdays) from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

RAPID CITY: Black Hills Contraband Distillery, 601 Kansas, improv and open mic on first and third Fridays of each month; Cave Collective, 524 Seventh St., occasional

shows by local and traveling comedians; Pure Bean Coffee House, 201 Main St., Friday events (6-8 p.m.) feature comedians and improv at least once a month.

SIOUX FALLS: Full Circle Book Coop, 123 W. 10th, comedy open mic on fourth Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Bonus Round Bar, 803 S. Cliff, last Sunday of every month; WoodGrain Brewery, 101 S. Phillips, every other Tuesday; Boss' Comedy Club, 2111 S. Minnesota, Wednesday night open mics, touring comics on Fridays and Saturdays; Books n Brewz, 201 N. Weber, every other

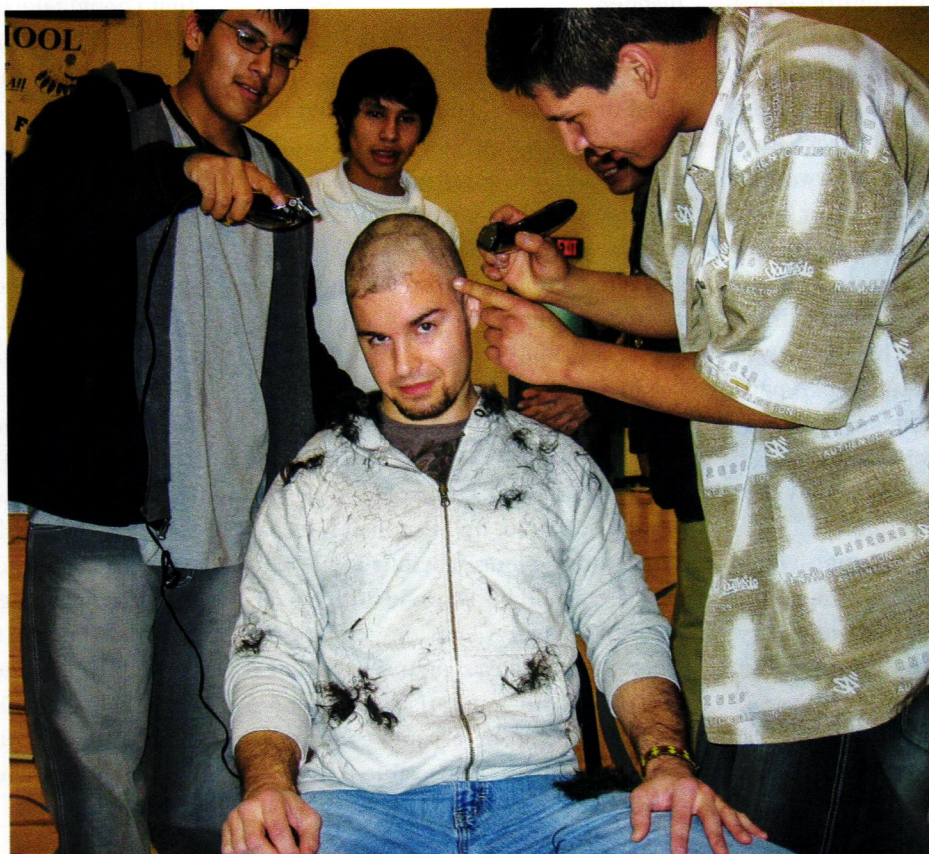
Tuesday; Wiley's Tavern, 330 N. Main, open mic for musicians and comedians beginning at 9 p.m. on Tuesdays.

VALLEY SPRINGS: A Homestead Brew, 26685 486th St., schedules local comedians in the winter months (check Facebook for schedule).

WATERTOWN: Sassy's on Broadway, 12 S. Broadway, occasional open mic nights and shows.

YANKTON: Ben's Brewing Company, 222 W. Third St., occasional open mic nights and shows.

Photo: Chris Freier, performing at Boss' Comedy Club in Sioux Falls.



Learning Lakota

Story by AL RUTHERFORD

MY FIRST TEACHING POSITION was on the Cheyenne River Reservation at Takini School when I was just 23 years old. It was 2006. I came to the rez from New Jersey with a degree in English literature and no teaching experience.

I moved to Takini straight off my job as a millwright, repairing industrial coffee roasters and food conveyor systems for the New York metro area. A college professor had heard about my transition into education and recommended a book by Terry Tempest Williams, *Pieces of White Shell*, about Williams' experience as a teacher on a Navajo reserva-

tion. Williams found the experience to be deeply spiritual. In one chapter she and the students ascend a mesa at sunrise to wash her hair in a desert pool with yucca root.

My students never proposed to bathe my hair in any prairie puddles. I did, however, offer to let them shave my head bald if the boys qualified for districts in basketball — which they did.

I heard the Lakota language on the first day of classes in late August. Every Monday morning began with teachers and students gathering in the gym to burn sage and on some occasions honor the achievements of a student, staff or

Photo: Takini School students celebrated basketball success by shaving the teacher's head.

community member. The entire school would line the walls of the gymnasium while a group of students would sing the Lakota flag song around a sizeable drum, whose sound would reverberate throughout the large space. Afterwards a Lakota speaker would say a prayer into a microphone while the student body and staff reflected on their week ahead. I had no idea what the kids around the drum were singing; it seemed like a lot was being said with a good amount of repetition. Later, I asked the meaning of “wah-yah.” I was told that in Lakota songs, these types of vocals are a kind of lyrical equivalent to “la-la-la” in English.

If my life were a Terry Tempest Williams book, that gathering for the morning flag song would have been my entry into learning the Lakota language. But that was my first day of my first year of teaching and my only concern was to learn the ropes as a high school English

teacher.

In slow and weary stages I became more aware of my surroundings. I noticed that some older adults would visit Takini and speak what to my unfamiliar ear seemed like a guttural, almost Portuguese-sounding language mixed with Arabic, except much slower and thicker. Of course, none of those languages are related to Lakota but that was my sense of it at the time.

I had never been a good language student in school, but I was intrigued when I heard this language being used often in the front office of Takini. The more I learned of my responsibilities as a teacher, the more obvious it was that progress would be slow and at times difficult to measure. Learning Lakota felt different. It posed a structured challenge that could bring me satisfaction, where I could notice progress and experience improvement; a pleasurable endeavor

that I could take on at my own pace.

I began by writing anything I thought was useful in a cheap notebook. It started as a hobby, a documentation of my curiosity. In short time, I became a more serious student of the language. I took the usual route with books and I listened to tapes in my car every weekend when I drove to buy groceries in Rapid City.

Father Eugene Buechel, a Catholic missionary, created a dictionary in the 1920s that was a standard, and has the distinction of being one of the first Lakota-English/English-Lakota reference books. It isn't user-friendly. As thick as it is, it felt to me like he wrote down each word forward and backward to double his output. Imagine flipping through Buechel's book of thousands of typewritten definitions and being under the illusion that this is how you will learn the language. I later discovered that many of his terms were irrelevant or obsolete.

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I found the best way to learn Lakota was to talk to those who spoke Lakota. I asked questions of my coworkers and neighbors and received quiet encouragement. I tried to keep what I learned relevant for classroom and daily life.

I used what I learned to communicate simple things in Lakota to my students. Some of them found it annoying, while others thought it amusing and generously played along. One day a high school senior brought her grandmother to parent-teacher conferences. She had told her grandma that I could speak a little Lakota, and Grandma kindly humored me as I fumbled my way through a basic explanation of her granddaughter's progress — helping me fill in the Lakota terms I didn't know.

After two years at Takini on Cheyenne River, I taught for two more years at Little Wound School in Kyle, on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Here, my speaking

ability improved, and my listening became more self-assured. By this time, I had been plugging along with the language for about a year and half. I learned that Cheyenne River and Pine Ridge had some differences in vocabulary when it came to modern terms like "secretary," but by and large seemed to speak quite similarly.

In Kyle, I found a group of friends with whom I could practice and make incremental daily advancements. I had realized the best way to gauge linguistic progress was to see if I could understand people having a conversation in Lakota. This method always tested my vocabulary and mental translation speed. A noteworthy moment happened for me one morning at the Kyle Post Office in early spring, 2010.

Attached to the Kyle Post Office was an old folks home which is still in use today. To get their mail, residents would

enter the tiny lobby from a door connected to their common living room. Naturally they always ran into acquaintances and conversed in Lakota, the language they grew up with. I would often hear them and wondered what they discussed during those chats.

That chilly morning, I saw two older men pleasantly talking with each other near the mail counter. As I dug my mailbox key out of my pocket, I tried to eavesdrop on their conversation. Pausing to listen, I found I could understand most of what they were saying. After nearly four years of learning, the secrets of the language had suddenly been unlocked:

"The weather is very cold today."

"Yes. Is your son coming?"

"Yes, he is coming."

"Good. See you later."



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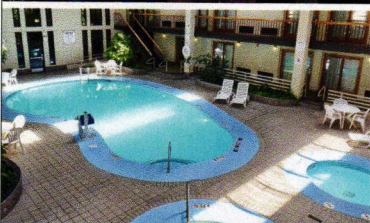


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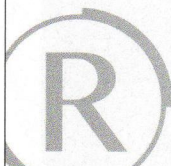


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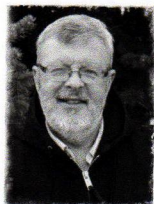
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MOUNTAIN AIRINGS

By Paul Higbee

RIP, JERRY THE BUM

IN ANNOUNCING Jerry Clancy's 1887 death, the *Spearfish Weekly Register* noted the deceased was, "better known as Jerry the Bum, an incorrigible toper that was three or four times driven out of Deadwood for vagrancy."

Okay, a little insensitive. But the newspaper's "bum" designation no doubt served a practical function, instantly calling to mind for readers a recognizable town character who just didn't fit his proper name. There's solid biographical information in those few words, too. Getting the municipal boot for vagrancy three or four times is a lot of bumming, especially in a wide-open town like old Deadwood.

I've noticed that early Black Hills obituaries were frequently blunt, and not only for those on the lower end of the socio-economic scale. In 1922 the prominent Fayette Cook, founding president of the college that became Black Hills State University, passed away. Cook's obituary writer took it upon himself to remind the community that "temperamentally Mr. Cook was not what is generally termed as 'a good mixer' ... he was lacking in that diplomatic spirit which is disposed to 'give and take,' and as a natural consequence created some antagonisms which should never have existed."

Ouch. He wasn't even in the grave yet.

I own a complete set of William Shakespeare's works, and a few months ago decided to read all of the Bard's plays in historical order. But I got sidetracked when I stumbled across a 23-volume set (loose

leaf notebooks) at Grace Balloch Memorial Library containing obituaries for virtually every man, woman and child who called the Spearfish vicinity home during the 19th and 20th centuries. I'm encountering characters Shakespeare might have envied, from comic foils to flawed protagonists who lived true tragedies.

I don't consider obituary reading morbid, even though back in the blunt days writers didn't shy away from vivid cause-of-death descriptions. Rarely did obits say a subject, "died of natural causes" or, "lost his life in an accident" and leave it at that. Rather, I'm reading about inescapable fires, rattlesnakes, poison socks, people falling in mine shafts, timber falling on people, consumption, horse wrecks, fatal childbirth, malignant diphtheria and at least one "dispute over a woman."

Obituary writers doubled as investigative reporters when covering the most unusual deaths. Take the case of Burt Poiselle, who died the same year as Jerry the Bum. An infection killed Poiselle, the *Weekly Register* determined, "induced by the action of poison in the coloring of a new pair of colored socks on a chafed wound on his foot, brought on by a long walk."

And poor Frank Alexander. After five painful years he succumbed to stomach ulcers, "caused by a horse falling with him, and the horns of the saddle coming in contact with his stomach."

Okay, that one is morbid, even for me. Talk about a lingering death.

The obituary that's left me the most


curious, about both victim and writer, was that of Tom Waggoner, “about 35, rather good looking, reticent, good at making trade.” His trade was horses and in the year of his death, 1891, “Judge Lynch” still avenged cattle and horse rustling. As far as I know, the lynch mob that killed Waggoner was never identified, but the *Weekly Register*’s writer seemed to have excellent sources who described how Waggoner, “answered the questions carelessly put to him — ‘How many of these horses did you rustle?’ with the remark, ‘O, about half of them.’”

Is it possible Waggoner died simply because of a snarky, smart-mouth reply?

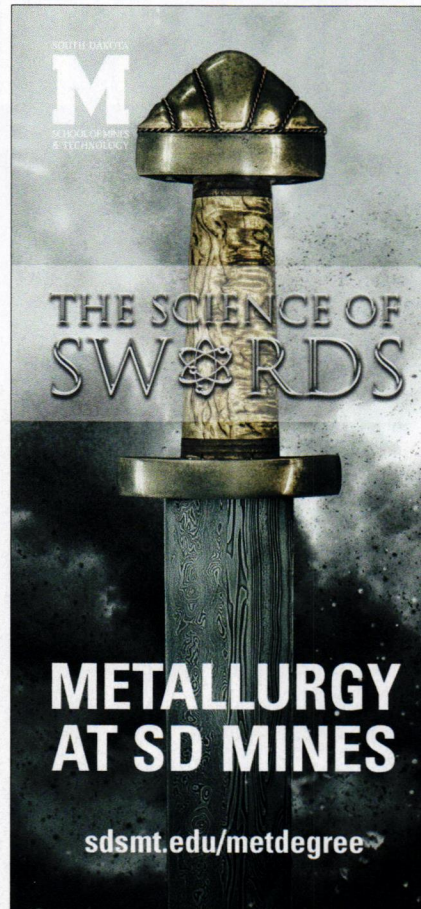
Obituaries have long been a professional interest of mine. I’ve written many, usually for friends and relatives, and occasionally for newspaper editors who believe I may have unique insight into a recently departed South Dakotan. The typical turn-around for these requested obituaries? “First thing tomorrow morning, if possible. A couple hours from now, by late afternoon, would be better.”

The year Elvis Presley died, a friend and I decided to enter the obituary field by launching a new national magazine called *OBIT* — glossy, not dark, featuring the lives of celebrities who had passed away the previous week. Think *People* magazine limited to dead entertainers, athletes, politicians and other big names. For better or worse, *OBIT*’s own obituary was recorded before a single issue went to press. The idea kind of made sense in the months of celebrity nostalgia following Elvis’s passing.

But by then, the golden age of colorful, blunt obituary writing had long passed. Obituaries had evolved into modern times when funeral home staff came up with respectful accounts aimed largely to soothe the grieving family (certainly a noble mission), and when family members themselves often craft the words.

I missed the era of Jerry the Bum-style writing by a generation or two. I like to imagine that old-style obituaries were the products of hardened men wearing derbies and sucking cigars as they gathered facts and pounded typewriter keys. And hardened women, as well, also smoking cigars. The Black Hills knew some of them, too. 

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

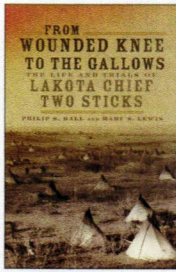


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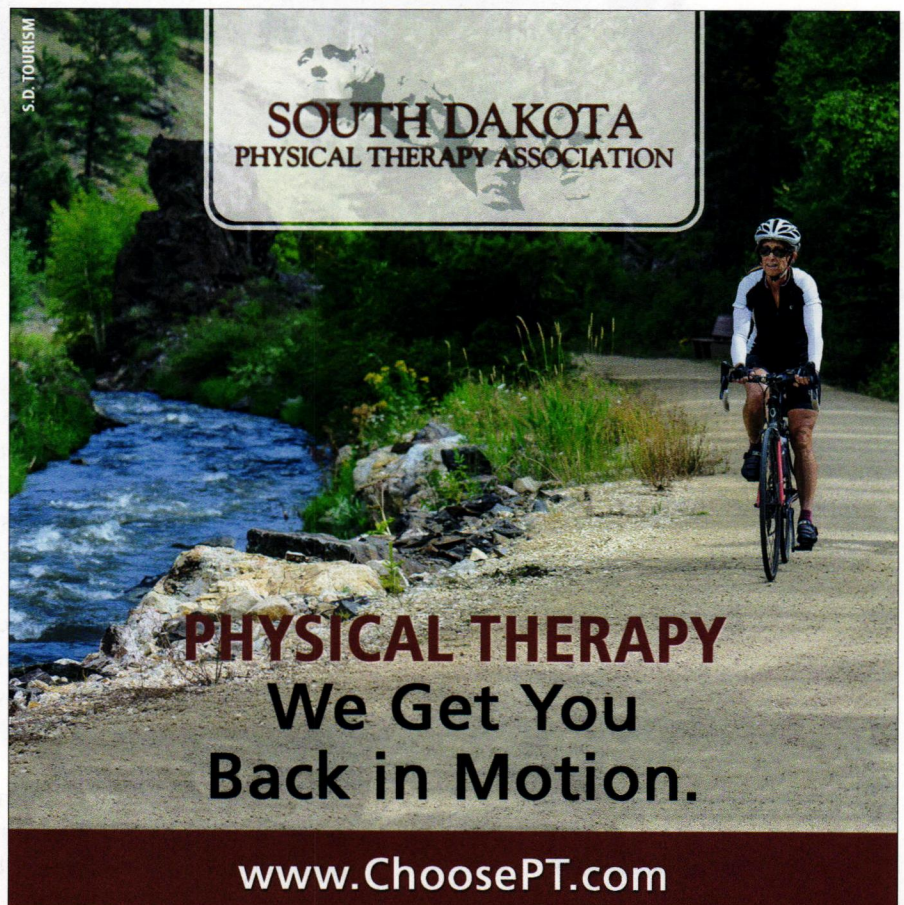
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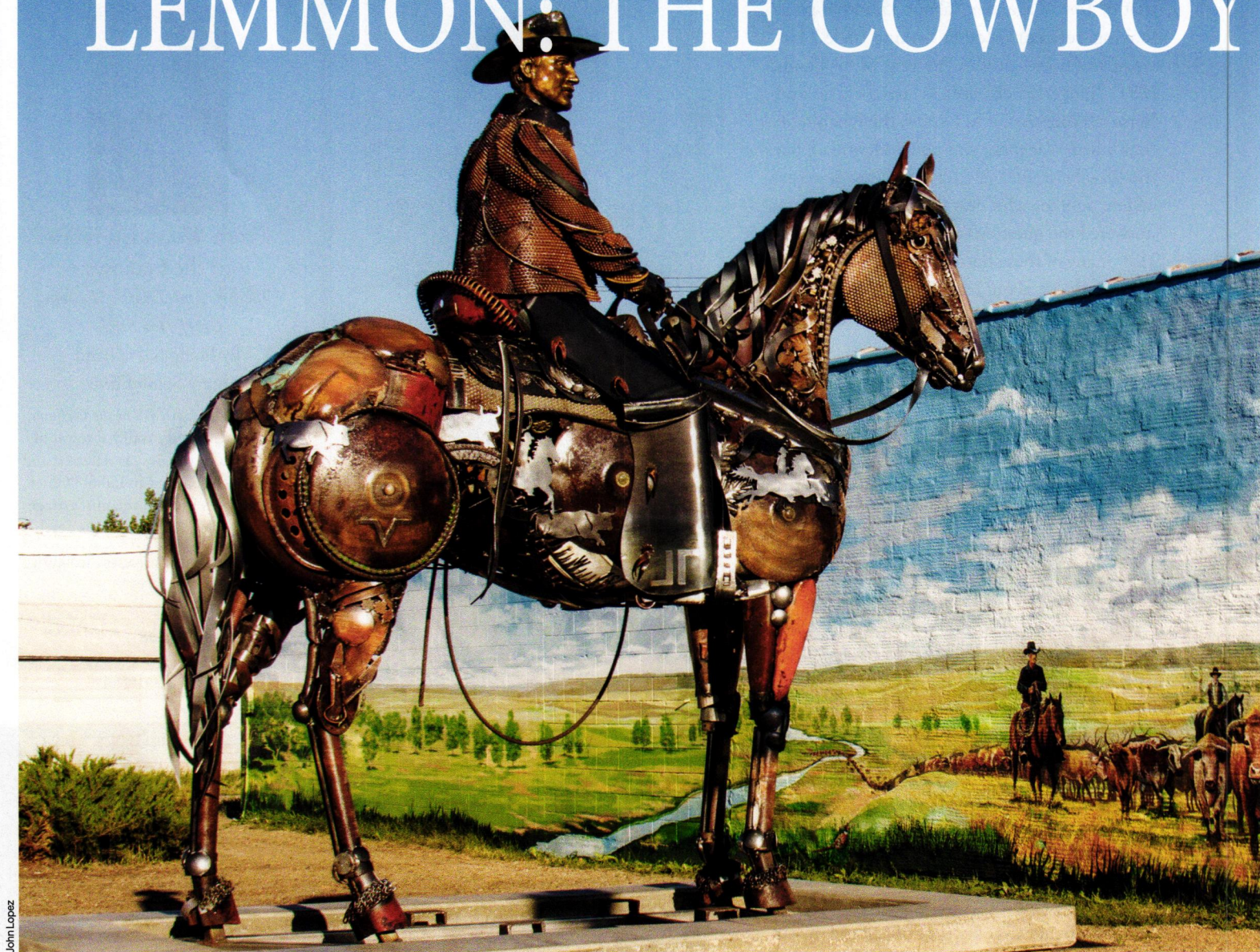
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LEMMON: THE COWBOY



John Lopez

They might call it the
cowboy capital of
the Dakotas, but real
cowboys don't brag
...and truthfully
there's more than
cattle afoot

Story by **BERNIE HUNHOFF**

IF SOUTH DAKOTA BUILT a tribute to the American cowboy, it might look like Lemmon. The little city that straddles the border of the two Dakotas has just 1,200 citizens, but it seems 10 times that size on days when there's a rodeo or cattle auction. In fact, even on a slow day, Lemmon looks like our cowboy capital, though nobody there would use that term to describe their town because most cowboys won't brag.

We tried to get Paul Huffman to speak philosophically on Lemmon's prominence in the beef world, but the

77-year-old cowboy politely and plainly responded, "It's big cattle country. It's as simple as that."

Huffman runs Lemmon Livestock, an auction barn that holds sales every Wednesday, and also on Thursdays during the fall and winter "cattle run," when ranchers bring bawling spring calves to market. A big sale attracts hundreds of buyers and sellers and up to 6,000 head of cattle. Ranchers sip coffee and enjoy hot beef sandwiches — with homemade gravy and real mashed potatoes — in a restaurant at the auction barn before gathering on

CAPITAL



bleachers for the auction. Millions of pounds of beef change hands at a busy winter sale, and enough money to make a Chicago banker blush, though in Lemmon a stranger from the city would be hard-pressed to know the buyers from the sellers. Seven-figure transactions transpire in minutes, with nothing more noticeable than a nod or the raise of a finger.

Cattle outnumber people 4 to 1 in South Dakota, making beef the biggest single sector of the state's economy. However, in Perkins County, where Lemmon is the largest city, there are 37

cattle for every man, woman and child. Seventy-eight percent of the land is grass. The federal farm census indicates that cow and calf sales total about \$70 million a year in the county of just 2,400 residents.

"We especially have a lot of natural grasslands to the south and west," says Huffman. Most of the ranch land is privately owned, but the region also includes the Grand River National Grasslands, a 154,000-acre native prairie. A hundred ranchers have allotments that permit them to graze from 50 to 300 head of cattle — some in community pastures that operate like the open range that existed until 1902.

Lemmon was founded in 1907 by a cowboy who was instrumental in the transition from the open range to today's fenced prairie. Ed "Boss Cowman" Lemmon started as a ranch hand in Wyoming at age 13. Soon he was a trail boss, herding longhorns from Texas to fatten on the rich grasses of the Northern Plains. He was a founder of the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association in 1902 and a leader of the beef industry when he discovered that a rail line was about to be built that would straddle the

state border. He quickly bought land for a townsite, hoping he could make his new town the county seat for both Perkins County in South Dakota and Adams County in North Dakota.

Though he didn't win either courthouse, Lemmon did get his town. Railroad officials named it after the cowboy, and he lived there until the day he died in 1945. Old-timers remember him to-



Phyllis Schmidt and her family spearheaded the creation of Lemmon's museum. She often greets guests near a sculpture of mountainman Hugh Glass.



Lemmon embraces art, especially the sculptures of native son John Lopez, who has gained prominence as a metal artist. He created the Boss Lemmon statue (opposite page) and the school's cowboy mascot (above).



day. Stories about his exploits are legendary, and several books about his life are for sale at the Grand River Museum, where an exhibit chronicles the life of a man the townspeople called Dad Lemmon.

The museum is a good reflection of how the cattle industry shapes Lemmon. The Schmidt family homesteaded in the Grand River Valley in 1910, contemporaries of Dad Lemmon. “Our grandchildren are sixth generation on the ranch,” says Stuart Schmidt. “My folks started the museum after many years of finding dinosaur fossils.”

Thinking the fossils and other local artifacts might be a way for the town to draw tourists, Stuart’s parents Ed and Phyllis Schmidt began to collect historical and geological items. “We moved into a downtown location in 1998 but

we knew we needed more room and we wanted a highway location,” says Phyllis. “We soon bought an old machine shop that was empty for a long time. It was a mess. People thought we were crazy,” she laughed.

If so, their friends and neighbors like crazy: the Schmidts’ efforts attracted many supporters, including the Wheelers and Beelers — two other pioneer families who are very philanthropic in Perkins County, though that’s not a word that cowboys would use. Four years ago, the nonprofit museum moved into a new addition with ample space for exhibits, fossils and cast specimens from the dinosaur age.

Native American culture and history is also documented, and Stuart notes that new information continues to show up, including a hand-drawn map of

how to fence the reservation that was sketched by Dad Lemmon. The map was discovered at the Wisconsin State Historical Society when Nathan Sanderson was researching and writing *Controlled Recklessness*, the latest book about the pioneer cattleman.

The museum has exhibits on major Hunkpapa leaders, including Sitting Bull, Rain in the Face, Gall and Thunder Hawk. It also has a timeline for Creation Science. The entryway features a life-size sculpture of a grizzly bear attacking mountain man Hugh Glass, an epic survival story of the American West that took place in 1823 in the Grand River Valley south of town. After the story was retold in the blockbuster movie *The Revenant*, Lemmon promoters started a Hugh Glass Rendezvous that has gained popularity every year.



The town's signature attraction, since the 1930s, is the Petrified Wood Park, a funky collection of petrified wood, fossils, stones and other geological wonders, some mortared together in the shape of trees and spires. Rounded stones known as cannonballs, collected largely from the nearby Cannonball River Valley, are a big part of the park.

But not even petrified art can upstage cowboys and cattle as Lemmon's top attraction. "Let's face it, this town has been a cattle town since the start," says Dave Johnson, the economic development director. "Ranching is our foundation. Everybody feels it when cattle prices go up or down, whether or not they own cattle themselves."

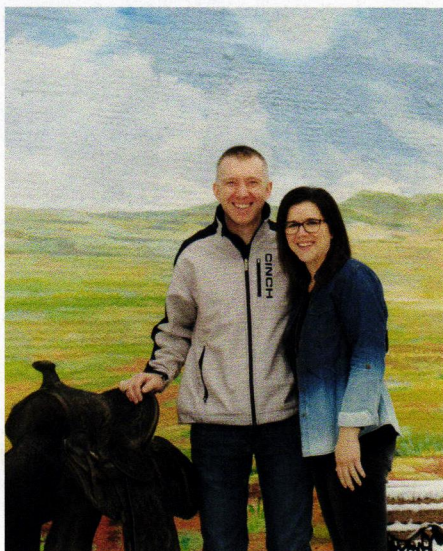
Johnson says the cow culture goes beyond dollars and cents; it impacts the arts, literature, recreation and educa-

tion. The local high school mascots are Cowboys and Cowgirls. Rodeo is bigger than football and some local athletes have done well on the rodeo circuit, including Stuart and Lisa Schmidt's son, Chuck, who is a champion saddle bronc rider.

Lisa's brother, John Lopez, is a nationally acclaimed metal sculptor. Several of his sculptures are found in town, including the museum's Hugh Glass piece; a cowboy aboard a bucking horse, by the front door of the high school; and a representation of Dad Lemmon on a horse that stands in a little plaza downtown. Lopez has opened a studio and gallery known as the Kokomo Inn next to the plaza, one of several recent civic additions and improvements — many of them either assisted or spearheaded by Dave Johnson's organization, the Lem-

Perkins County is home to more than 100,000 cattle in the summer months, including this herd near White Butte in the Grand River Valley. Lemmon, the largest city in the county, has developed as both an economic and cultural hub for northern West River.

Photo by Christian Begeman



Lemmon entrepreneurs were featured at last summer's Energize Conference. Dave Johnson led a panel discussion with (from right) retailer Kate Westphal, photographer Brittany Schnell, farmer Hayden Evans and butcher Carl Kimmerle. Jack and Kim Anderson (bottom left) told of their rodeo business and Westphal (bottom right) gave a tour of her boutique.

mon Area Charitable and Economic Development.

Johnson worked as a commercial photographer in Dallas and Chicago before coming home. One of his first challenges was the Palace Theater, a dilapidated movie house where he ran the reels as a teenager. The community supported his efforts to digitize the projector system, renovate the interior and reopen the theater for movies, live concerts and other events.

When the State Extension Department held its annual Energize Conference in Lemmon last summer, Johnson

gathered some of the town's newest business men and women in the theater for a panel discussion. He began by explaining that even he is sometimes amazed at how much a little city can accomplish. He credited a creative culture and a community spirit. "The trend for a lot of these little places in the 1980s and 1990s was just to become a bedroom town to a bigger city but Lemmon never had that option because we are too far away from a bigger town," he said. The only alternative was to maintain a high quality of life despite the smaller population. Encouraging museums, art, restau-

rants, theater, entrepreneurship and music seemed daunting, but it's probably not any more difficult than fencing the prairie or building a petrified park.

Johnson told the Energize attendees, who came from equally small communities across South Dakota, that he learned an important lesson from participating in big projects: "It's about doing what's right — it's never about the money."

Lemmon's success stories include a new housing neighborhood and the downtown plaza known as Boss Cowman Square. The community has also supported several new businesses, including a hotel, grocery store, butcher shop, photography studio and a boutique with sequin-lined denim jackets for cowgirls. They coexist with old Lemmon standbys like Wheeler Manufacturing, a family enterprise that employs more than 100 jewelry-makers.

Romancin' the Range, the new boutique, shares space with a flower store and coffee shop. The owner is Kate Westphal, a young nurse who grew up on a nearby ranch and moved away to Bismarck, North Dakota. "I thought I was never coming back," she says, "but I started to miss home. Nobody greeted me or asked how Dad's sheep were doing or how my mom was feeling. Now, if my car breaks down I have 10 people to call, where in the city I had no one. I also realized there were opportunities for growth." She works as an R.N. at the local nursing home, manages the boutique and makes leather jewelry.

The Current Connection is another Lemmon success. Jack and Kim Anderson started the computer and office supply store 15 years ago. When the local Ben Franklin store closed, they added school supplies. Jack, who grew up locally and rode bulls in high school and college, recognized that the rodeo industry wasn't taking advantage of technology. He developed software and started a company called Midwest Rodeo Entries, which handles reservations for the South Dakota Rodeo Association, the

Colorado Rodeo Association and the Indian National Finals Rodeo.

"Jack wanted to stay active in the rodeo industry, but not ride bulls," Kim says. "This was a way for him to do that." He also created summer jobs for teachers and students, who staff the phones. "It saves cowboys and cowgirls a lot of time," says Kim, "and it gets them to the right place at the right time."

The town's new LemmonMade Butcher Shop was started by Carl and Kylee Kimmerle, who came from Utah two years ago to live on land homesteaded by Kylee's great-grandfather. The shop quickly gained a reputation for beef jerky, breakfast sausage and other specialties. The Kimmerles hope to eventually raise and process their own cattle and hogs, but for now the new business and three young children occupy most of their time.

The downtown area has also been bolstered by the Beeler Center. "It was put up about a dozen years ago because of the success of the Boss Cowman Rodeo," Johnson says. "Every year, we would rent a tent for the rodeo and someone had the good idea that it might make sense to just build a building." Ever since, the town has hosted more weddings than 1,200 people would ever propose. "Lots of times, the bride and groom are not from here but they know they can stay in the hotel and there are plenty of restaurants so it's just a good place to get married."

The town's six restaurants include Benny's, just across the street from the Beeler Center. Matt Johnson (David's nephew), who recently purchased the long-established eatery, says it's a challenge to run a steakhouse when most of your customers are ranchers who raise some of the world's best beef.

"You gotta start with the good stuff," he laughs. His most popular menu item is called the Steak Sandwich, but again that's cowboy modesty: the "sandwich" is a delicious sirloin coulotte.

Chislic is also popular at Benny's, but



Stuart and Lisa Schmidt (top) say fossils and ancient geology are popular at the Grand River Museum, which also includes an exhibit on the town's founder, "Boss Cowman" Lemmon. The Kokomo Inn (right) is artist John Lopez's gallery on Main Street.

Johnson doesn't use lamb, like restaurants in Hutchinson County, where Germans-from-Russia first brought chislic to the Dakotas. He grills cubes of —you guessed it — beef sirloin ball tip.

That seems appropriate, however, in a city corralled by cowboys.



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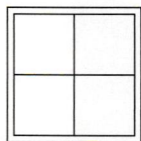
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INSIDE AND OUT

Designing South Dakota



The Boathouse Project

Lake Kampeska history was slipping into the water

By Bernie Hunhoff

LAKE KAMPESKA dropped 8 feet during the dry years of the early 1930s. As the water ebbed, the remains of an old steamboat called *The Kampeska Belle* could be seen in the mud.

Then rains returned and Watertown's big lake saw a renaissance. State baseball championships were played at the lake in the mid-1930s. A Carn-Aqua celebration, advertised as "the Northwest's greatest water carnival," drew 40,000 people. The Spider Web, a circular roller-skating rink, hosted boxing matches and marathon dance competitions. The big natural lake on the Big Sioux River



INSIDE & OUT



Stony Point: A Kampeska Blessing

WILLIAMSES HAVE WELCOMED GUESTS at Lake Kampeska since 1883, when Charlie and Maggie Williams arrived as homesteaders. Charlie liked hunting and fishing better than farming, so he started a sportsmen's camp that grew into one of the lake's most popular resorts.

Five generations of the family have run Stony Point. In 1909, Charlie bought a 40-foot excursion boat for his son, Billy, who named it *Stella Mae* after his wife. Considered the sturdiest passenger boat on Kampeska, the *Stella Mae* often motored to assist other boats in stormy weather. However, it also capsized on a few occasions when the passengers all rushed from one side to the other to see something.

Through the years, the Williamses built a baseball field and grandstand and a circular pavilion known as the Spider Palace in 1927 (and another in 1946 when the original collapsed in a heavy snowstorm). A resort store and bar called The Prop was constructed in 1971 with lumber from the Spider Palace.

Mike and Conda Williams came home to run the Stony Point campgrounds and store in 1988. Mike, a golf pro, became well-known for conservation efforts in the lake region. Their son Willie joined them and together they converted The Prop into a family restaurant specializing in hamburgers, especially a garlic cheeseburger developed by Willie that remains a favorite of regulars.

Sadly, Conda lost her husband in 2010 and her son in 2014, both from cancer. She is the last Williams, but the family's five-generation tradition of hospitality is in good hands. The Prop is a warm and welcoming place. Diners pin memorabilia on the ceiling, everything from signed softballs and dollar bills to funeral cards. Conda doesn't charge for pool, shuffleboard or coffee. She wants kids to enjoy the games. "A lot of my friends come to visit in the morning over coffee and I wouldn't charge them if it were my house so I don't charge them here," she says. "This is my house. This is my family. This is my sanctuary. I am blessed."

Her Kampeska neighbors surely see Stony Point as a blessing to the lake.

Photo: The Williamses — Mike, Willie and Conda — at Stony Point.

Craig and Cindy Christianson (inset photo) tackled restoration of the historic boathouse, shown (below) before it fell into disrepair. Workers moved the structure upshore (far right) to build a new foundation.



was as popular as ever.

That's also when Dr. Harry Bartron built a boathouse on the south shore near Stony Point for his speedboat *Pompeska*, considered the fastest boat in the West. The boathouse's sloping roofline and windows matched the Dutch Colonial Revival style of the Bartron family cabin.

Boathouses were not uncommon on Kampeska. Cabin owners usually built them to store their expensive boats. But the Bartron boathouse was larger and more stylish than most. Measuring 34-by-25, it included a small kitchen and utility room and a bright and comfortable family room with an expansive view of the lake's sunsets. It soon became



a landmark for boaters on the 5,000-acre lake.

World War II and postwar modernization changed the lake culture. *Pompeska* was spotted by a photographer in dry storage by 1950. Bartron died in 1953. His cabin survived the passing years, but the constant whipping of ice and waves took a toll on the boathouse. Every year, it leaned further into the lake.

Craig Christianson became acquainted with the Bartron property when his father, the local hospital administrator, bought a cabin at Stony Point in the 1950s. He and his siblings, Harry and Kym, lived “about 20 houses away” from the property. The Christiansons learned to boat and ski on wooden Chris-Crafts. Their 1961 Grand Prix, one

of only 35 built by Chris-Craft, exploded in front of Stony Point in the 1980s. They found the same model in 1991 and it has become a family keepsake.

Craig and his wife Cindy live in Rapid City, but they’ve always had a love for Kampeska, so in 2015 they bought the old Bartron cabin and the boathouse, which was then perilously close to falling into the water. Sheets of plywood seemed to be propping up one corner. They never really debated what to do with the structure. “We felt compelled to restore it,” says Craig, “not just for ourselves but for the historical significance of Lake Kampeska.”

The Christiansons’ first step was to call Watertown architect David Todd, who appreci-

ated their desire to save the structure. “Several times, we sat out there in the boathouse to talk about the plans and the views were amazing,” he says. “But it needed help. The concrete foundation was sagging, cracked and broken and it was tipping. Everything was shifting into the lake and you could feel the slope just by walking across the floor.”

Todd says it was fun and interesting because it was the only boathouse he’d worked on in 44 years as an architect in Glacial Lakes country. “As far as the drawings and design, it wasn’t that different from any other historic building but the site on the hillside and shoreline made it unusual.”

The lake lies within the Watertown city

limits, so the Christiansons needed approval from the planning commission. Todd proposed lifting the boathouse off its deteriorated concrete pilings and moving it a slight distance, building a new foundation at the 100-year flood mark, and then moving the structure back to the shore. "The goal was not only to save the boat house," says Todd, "but also to return it to its original character."

Local preservationists supported the project, as did the planning commission members, who voted unanimously in favor. In October of 2016, the old boathouse was carefully raised and rolled ashore by the Thien Moving Company of Clara City, Minnesota. Cindy began a photo and word journal of every step in the two-year renovation. Looking back, she says "it was like watching a symphony."

As cold weather froze the shoreline's ice and mud, workers were able to truck materials and excavating equipment to the site to remove the old concrete piers and dig the new foundation. Eric Skott and Joe Turback of Crestone Builders took on the challenge as the general

contractors. Dennis Arnold, a retired school principal, did the finishing and siding woodwork on the living quarters.

On May 5, 2018, the movers returned to the lake to set the structure on its new foundation. It was a celebratory day for the Christiansons and all who had labored to restore the boathouse. Craig added some color and gaiety by tying dozens of balloons to the exterior, a takeoff from the movie *Up* in which Carl tied 20,000 balloons to his house and sailed around the globe.

The boathouse flew just a few dozen feet, where it should sit safe and sound for many generations. D&J Masonry of Watertown added stone cladding to the concrete foundation, using rock from the Hill City area of the Black Hills. Arnold restored the interior and Crestone added a wrap-around deck, where the Christiansons and their four adult children — Katie, Chris, AJ and Ben — now congregate as often as possible to enjoy the Kampeska sunsets.

Cindy used her meticulous notes and pho-

tos to produce a family book of the restoration. The only information missing in her book is financial records, so we asked Craig about the project costs. He tried to answer — even starting some calculations in his head — before saying, "I really don't know. After it went over budget, I stopped counting. It was just the right thing to do. It was going to fall in the lake."

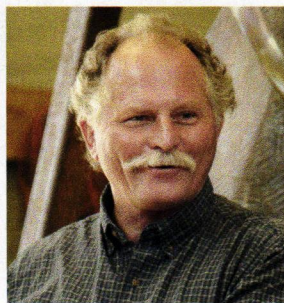
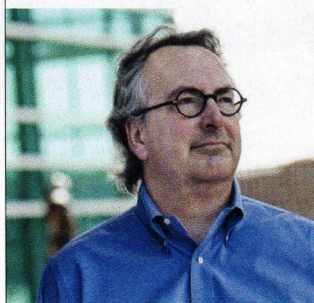
Then he waxed philosophical. "I like it when a community has a nice building, one that someone took extra efforts to build a long time ago. I've always felt that the least we could do, when that building gets old, is to try to preserve it."

With that, he and Cindy gave us a tour of the boathouse. We inspected the interior of the nautical-decorated cabin, enjoying the view and the sound of waves lapping against the shore. As we descended the concrete steps to the three-stall boat garage we saw the Christiansons' mahogany Chris-Craft tied where *Pompeska* was docked 80 years ago.



AIA
South Dakota

Architectural Service Awards for 2019



LEGACY AWARD


Jeff Hazard, AIA
the longtime CEO and principal of
Koch Hazard Architects

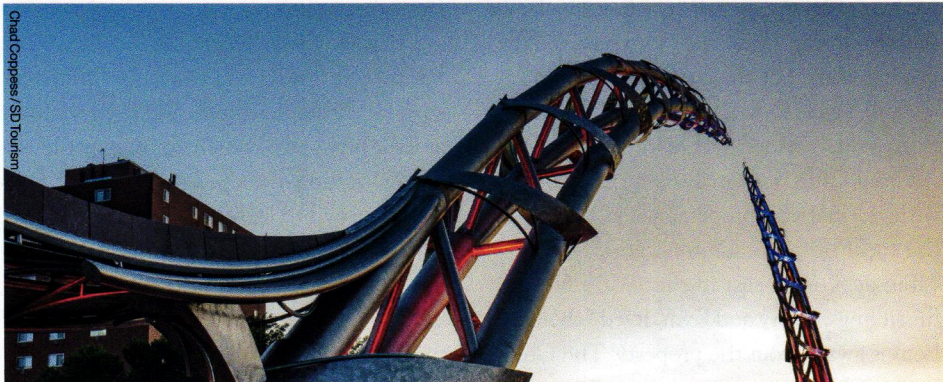
YOUNG ARCHITECT AWARD

Sara Lum, AIA
a planner with the South Eastern
Council of Governments (SECOG)

CHAMPION OF ARCHITECTURE

Dale Lamphere, sculptor


Albertson Engineering Inc.
CHAMPION OF ARCHITECTURE
Albertson Engineering Inc.



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The Farmhouse Twist

By John Andrews

U-TURNS ARE common on North Avenue in Spearfish these days. The tall, framed-in barn between the road and Spearfish Creek is enough to catch a driver's attention, especially when they glimpse a couple enjoying a meal and a glass of wine inside.

The new point of interest is The Farmhouse Bistro and Bar, and yes, it's finished, though the pergola made of Alaskan yellow cedar resembles a barn awaiting its siding. "It's an eye-catcher," says Jeff Steiner, an architect with JLG Architects and a designer on the project. "People driving along the street turn around just to check it out. Some people think that it's still under construction, but they're starting to learn the story and I think they really like it."

The story begins with The Farmhouse's co-owner, Merideth Pangburn-Walker, and her connection to the land on which her restaurant stands. For years, this was the Meier Ranch, where Josef Meier kept camels, horses and other animals for his world-famous Black Hills Passion Play. Pangburn-Walker's parents ran the concession stand and gift shop as she and her brother, Chris, were growing up. That led to a deep connection to the Meier family, their ranch and the hospitality business.

Pangburn-Walker spent 15 years





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South Dakota



HONOR AWARD 1



Passive House



PEOPLE'S
CHOICE



MERIT AWARD 1

HONORAWARDS

1: South Dakota State University DoArch,
for its design of Passive House in Brookings

PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

JLG Architects, of Sioux Falls, Rapid
City and Brookings, for its design of the
Farmhouse Bistro

MERIT AWARDS

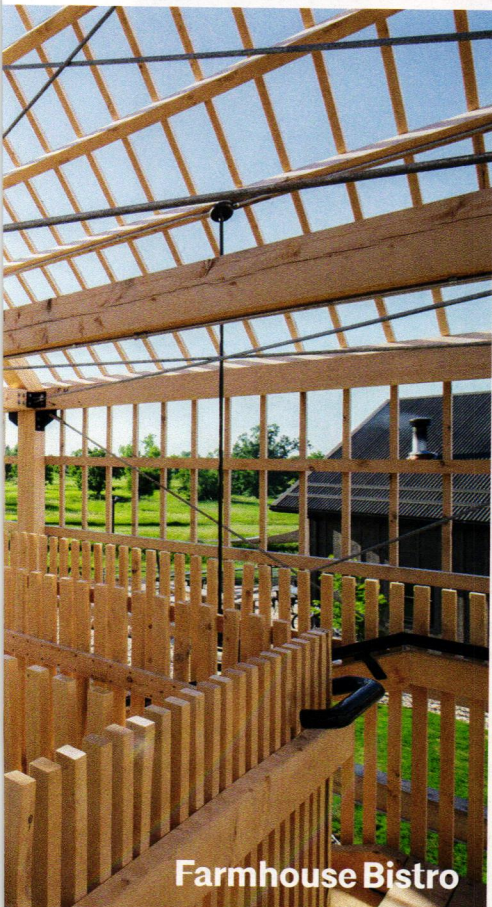
1: JLG Architects, of Sioux Falls, Rapid City
and Brookings, for its design of Farmhouse
Bistro

2: TSP Inc. of Sioux Falls, Rapid
City and Watertown, for its design of Hamre
Recital Hall at Augustana University

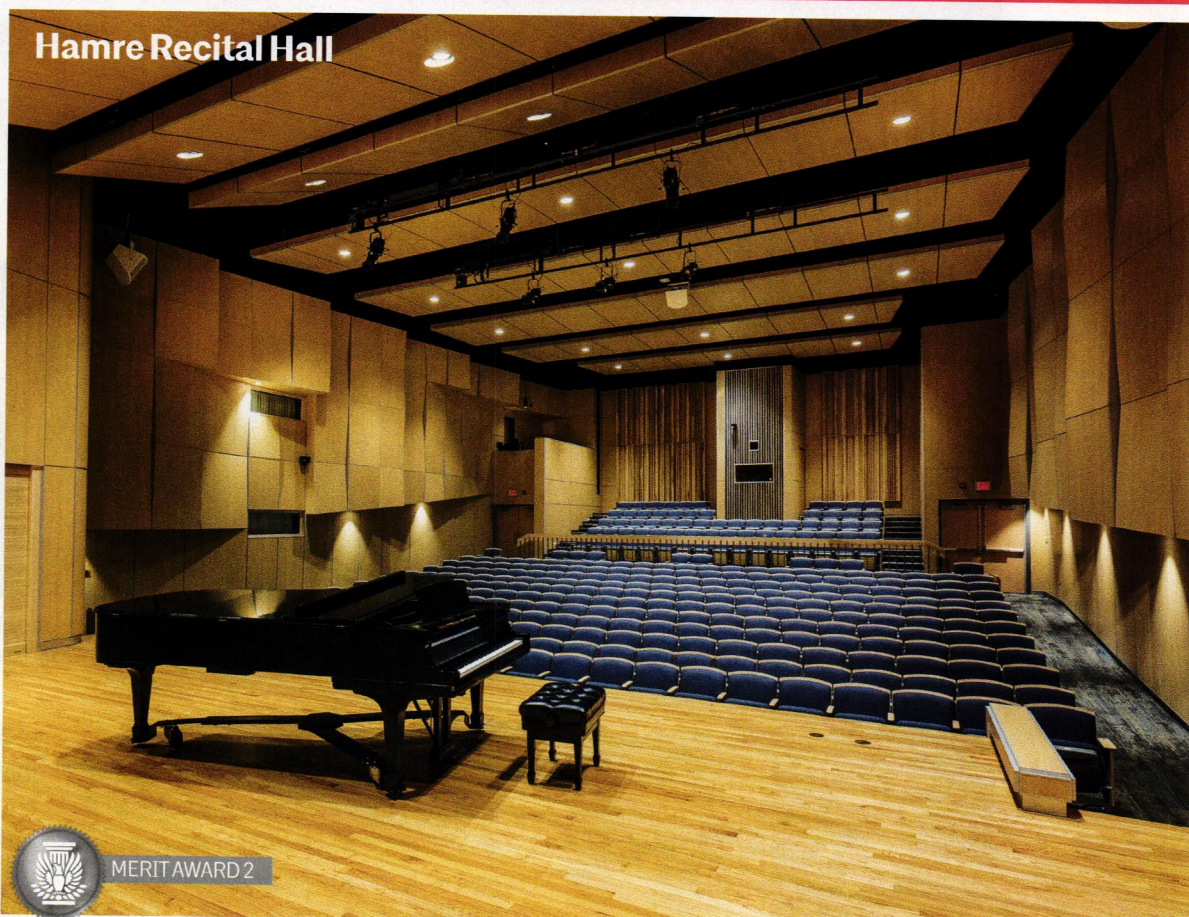
3: CO-OP Architecture, of Sioux
Falls, Aberdeen and Rapid City,
for its design of Northern
State University athletic fields
in Aberdeen

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Design Award Winners for 2019



Farmhouse Bistro



Hamre Recital Hall

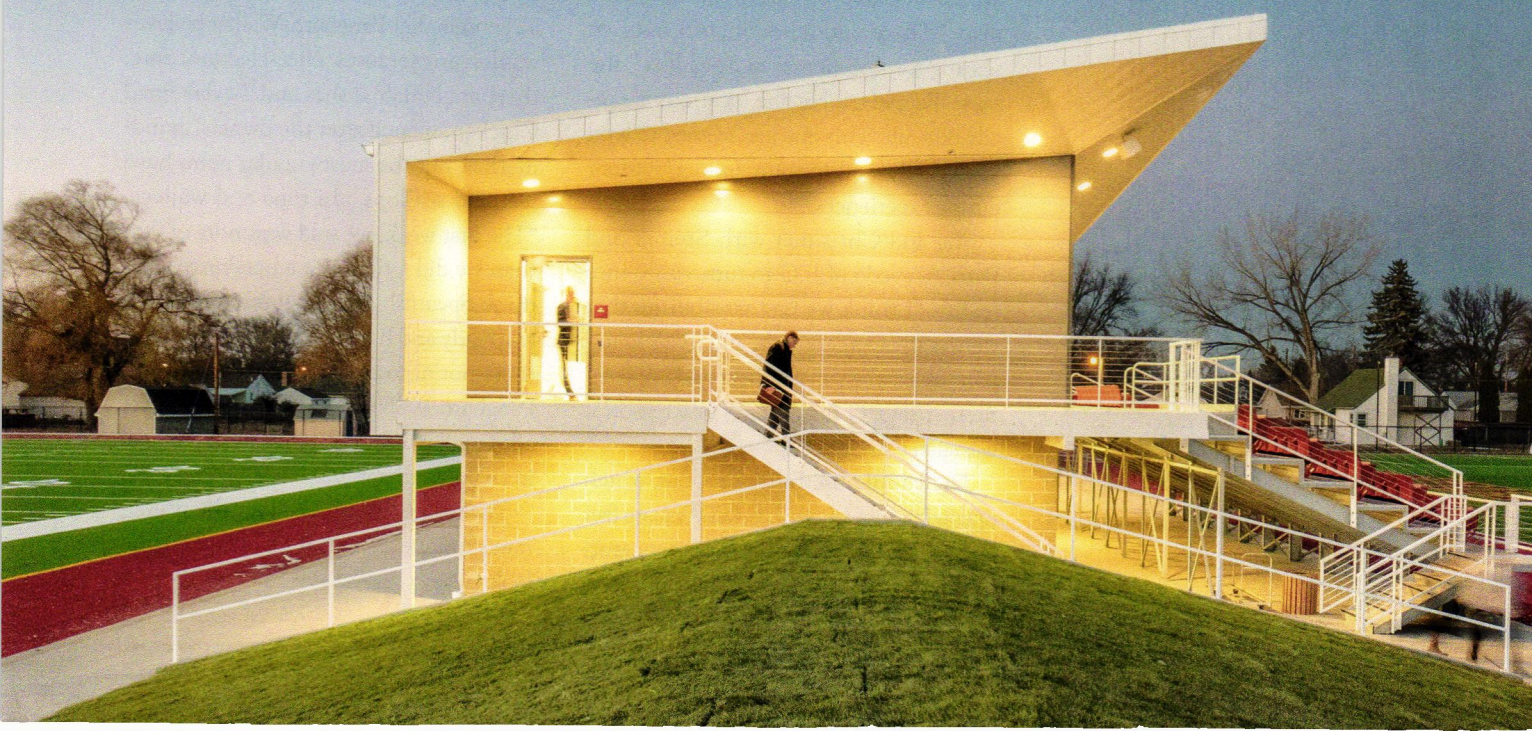


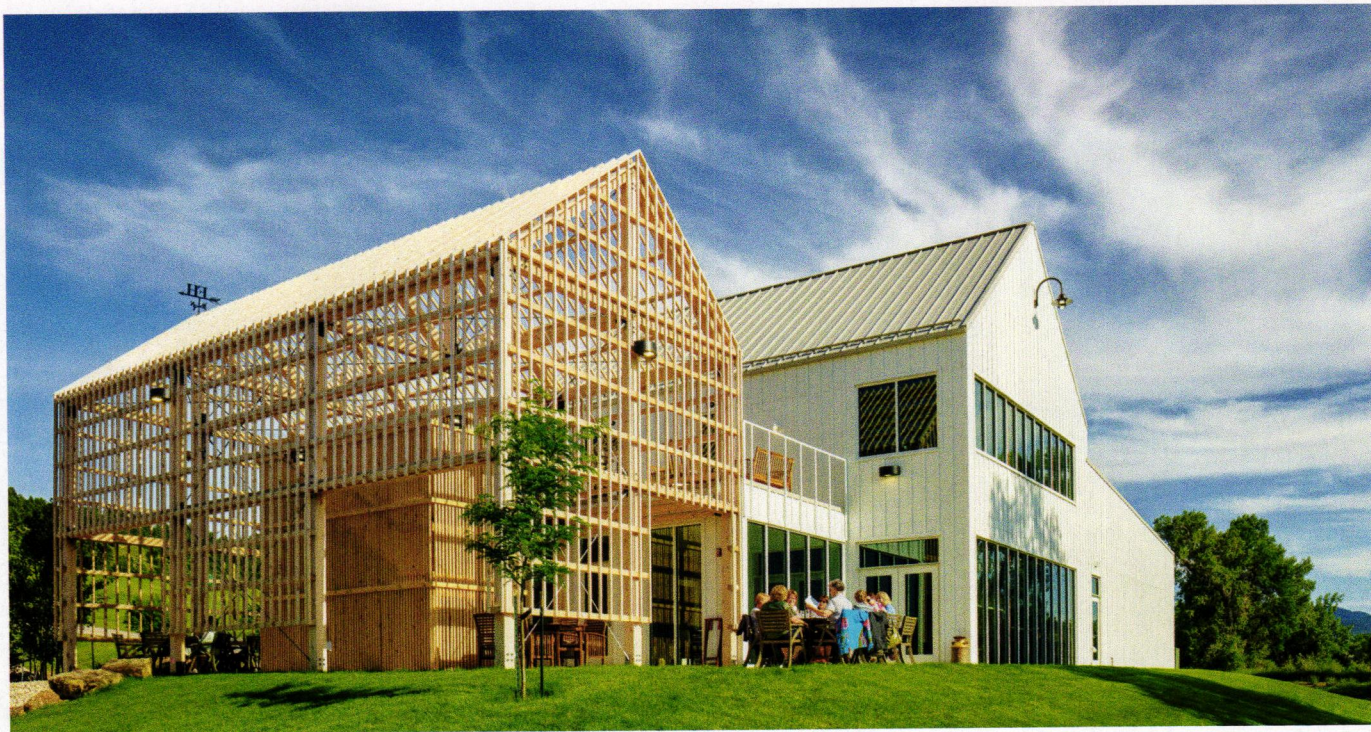
MERIT AWARD 2

Northern State University athletic fields



MERIT AWARD 3





A pergola made from Alaskan yellow cedar elicits double-takes from passing motorists who wonder what is under construction, but the finished dining area adds to the rustic charm of The Farmhouse Bistro and Bar, Spearfish's newest eatery along the banks of Spearfish Creek.



The Farmhouse offers six different indoor and outdoor dining areas, including the pergola.

running bars and restaurants in Colorado. She moved home and worked five years for Liv Hospitality in Deadwood as the food and beverage director. Then she changed course, working as a general contractor building single-family homes. "But for those four years, all I did was think about restaurants," she says.

When the Meier property became available, she and Chris began working on a plan. "There's not a lot of great outdoor seating for restaurants in Spearfish," she says. "People try, but the locations are really difficult. This one just seemed to lend itself really well to some indoor/outdoor dining experiences."

She and Chris met with Steiner and Patri Acevedo of JLG to turn vision into reality. "I think we had sensibilities that were really in alignment, and that's so important between an architect and a client," Steiner says. "I think that's one reason it was such a success."

The Farmhouse Bistro and Bar, which opened in June of 2019, is 4,000 square feet and provides six indoor and outdoor seating environments, several featuring views

of Spearfish Creek. The restaurant sits in the same location as the Meier farmhouse. No original buildings from the Meier era survive, but Pangburn-Walker added an old plow, a metal feed bin and a few large milk containers outside to retain the agrarian feel. "We tried to make our restaurant reminiscent of what was there," she says.

Inside, chef Matt Herringer and the staff of 37 serve casual fine dining fare to a clientele that Pangburn-Walker believes was longing for just such a selection. Sure, there are buffalo dishes and Twyla's Fried Chicken, named after the owners' grandmother. But the most popular items have featured scallops, ahi tuna and walleye. "The first week, we sold way more of that than we did a ribeye or a hamburger, so I think Spearfish and the surrounding area was ready and happy to try some new stuff that's not necessarily on anyone's menu," Pangburn-Walker says. "We try to take really familiar dishes and put a twist on them in an unfamiliar way."

The same could be said for the restaurant's unique design. It's worth a second look.



New Life for McVicker Plaza

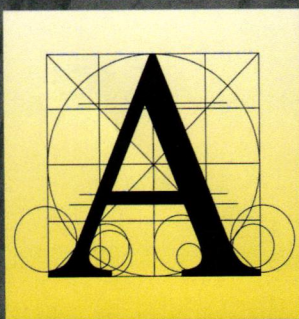
Plush coyotes and red USD T-shirts go out the door of Charlie's, a retail store selling University of South Dakota apparel and accessories on the west side of McVicker Plaza, but that's not unusual for a building that housed general merchandise for much of its nearly 140 years. What is new is the headquarters for the Vermillion Area Chamber and Development Company on the building's east side, as well as the CoLab, a collaborative space for entrepreneurs and professionals. Such is the new life for one of Vermillion's oldest buildings.

When the VCDC sought a move closer to the retail buzz of downtown Vermillion, officials identified the grand building at 2 E. Main St., built in 1884 and eventually named for Robert McVicker, who operated a store there from 1913 to 1921. They



Architects used historic photos as they restored McVicker Plaza, a large retail building at the corner of Main and Center in downtown Vermillion.

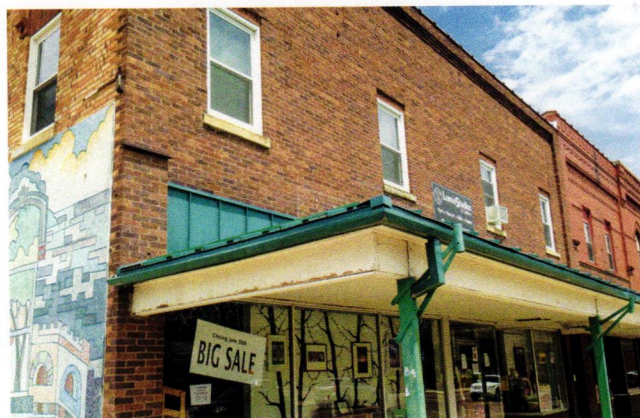
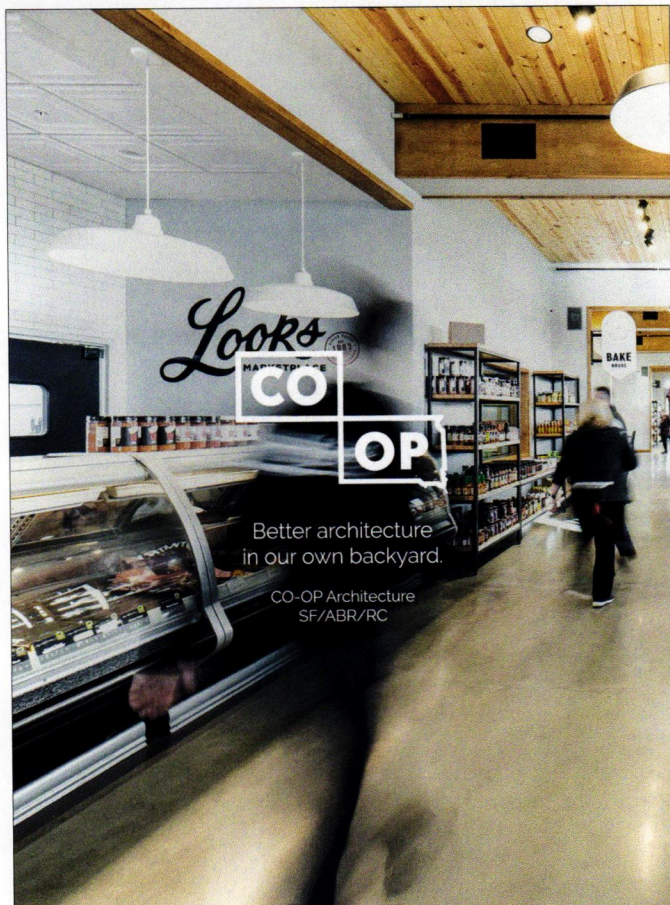
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Architects were able to replicate the original cornice pinwork and windows found on the west side of McVicker Plaza as they worked on the south facade.

utilized the expertise of Koch Hazard Architects in Sioux Falls to help restore the building to its 19th century glory.

Surprises lurked inside the old brick structure. Several renovations have transpired over the years, some of which remain a mystery because no records have been discovered to explain them. One such secret was revealed when the interior demolition began. "That's when we discovered the second floor, and how much settlement had really occurred in the original structure," says Keith Thompson, the lead architect on the renovation. For reasons unknown, two floor levels existed. "We went through many options and ended up just removing the entire second floor and rebuilding it."

Crews used historic photos to guide work on the south and west facades, which included preserving a 1974 mural on the west exterior wall. "Before demolition work had begun on the second floor, the framed openings for the original windows could be seen, so they could confirm the size and spacing," Thompson says. "The west side still had intact detailed cornice pinwork, so contractors took exact dimensions and replicated it on the south facade."

Inside, visitors will notice red accents (what other color for the hometown of USD?) scattered subtly throughout the first floor.



CHASING CATS

When a 70-year-old fishing record was overturned, South Dakota anglers turned their attention to the joys of catfishing

Story by **JOHN ANDREWS** | Illustration by **MIKE REAGAN**

IN THE SPRING OF 1949, Roy Groves was a 64-year-old grandfather who lived with his wife Alice in a little white house just a short walk from Toby's Lounge, today a legendary chicken shack in Meckling. He stood just under 6 feet tall, was stocky and had the quiet countenance you might expect from the grandfatherly figure shown in black and white photographs with an old fishing hat perched atop his head.

Groves knew a lot about fishing. Some considered him an expert. In fact, during a remarkable four days in May 1949, he pulled two monstrous catfish out of the James River that proved to be state and world records — a 94-pound, 8-ounce blue catfish and a 55-pound channel catfish.

His blue catfish record stood until September of 1959 when Ed Elliott, an electrician from Vermillion, caught a 97-pounder in the Missouri River. It was surpassed again by

current record holder Steve Lemmon of Elk Point, who landed a 99-pound, 4-ounce blue in the Big Sioux River on July 21, 2012. But when Groves died at age 82 in 1967, his channel cat was still the state champion, and it remained so until 2019, when the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks issued a ruling that justified what many anglers had long suspected — that Groves' channel cat wasn't really a channel after all. His 70-year-old record was voided.

The decision rankled Groves' grandchildren and great-grandchildren, many of whom still live in South Dakota. But it also rekindled interest in the bewhiskered creatures that swim South Dakota's waters.

SOUTH DAKOTA IS HOME to three types of catfish. Channel cats are the most widespread; they live in rivers and lakes throughout the state. Flathead catfish are found primarily in the Missouri River and its tributaries, the James and Big Sioux, but there is also an isolated population in Lake Mitchell. Blue catfish swim almost exclusively in the Missouri below Gavins Point Dam, though they can be caught along the lower James and Big Sioux rivers, as well.

Channel cats are easily recognizable by their whiskers, or barbels, that extend from the corners of their mouths. Their bodies are drab olive in color with white bellies and no scales. They lurk close to the bottom of a lake or river, preying on crustaceans, insects or other fish. All in all, a slimy-looking catfish may not be the most attractive species to find on the end of your hook, but according to Geno Adams, the fisheries program administrator for Game, Fish and Parks, they are among the state's most underutilized fish. "We have some absolutely phenomenal channel cat fishing in South Dakota, and they just don't get used like they do in some other states," Adams says. "We've always been a walleye-centric state. That's our number one sport fish. Channel catfish are pretty well dispersed around the country. Walleye are not. But these Missouri River reservoirs are absolutely full of fantastic catfish. When people from other states move here and they're big cat fishermen, or they come for a walleye trip and get winded off the reservoir and the guide takes them into the back of a bay

to fish cats, people are astounded by the quality of catfishing in these reservoirs."

Biologists are currently studying channel cats and flatheads on the James River from Olivet to its confluence with the Missouri. They hope to learn more about their lifespan and how the populations move and grow. B.J. Schall, a fisheries biologist with Game, Fish and Parks who is helping lead the study, says channel cats can be among the most accessible fish for beginning anglers. "Catfishing can be really inexpensive and really easy to do," Schall says. "You don't need the equipment that a lot of anglers use for walleye fishing. You can pull up to a bank, throw out a piece of bait that sinks to the bottom and just let it sit. That makes it a little more low tech than the guys who have depth finder systems and sonars in their boats. And if you can get access to a river system, you can just bump onto

the bank and fish. It doesn't necessarily require a boat."

Anglers like Jason Stansbury fish for the occasional channel cat, but he's part of a group that's passionate about landing trophy flatheads. Flathead catfish stay away from swiftly moving water, opting for deeper pools with plenty of cover. They can live a long time, which allows them to grow to monstrous proportions. Part of the Game, Fish and Parks' research on the James includes taking spines from a catfish's pectoral fin, which helps determine age. The oldest flathead they've discovered to date was 25 years old, and the largest weighed nearly 48 pounds and measured 44 1/2 inches. But they can get bigger. Davin Holland holds the current state record with a 63-pound, 8-ounce flathead caught in the James River.

Stansbury's biggest is 56 pounds, caught while fishing from the bank of the Big Sioux. "They're not like catching walleyes," says Stansbury, the catfishing expert for *Wild Dakota*, a popular hunting and fish-

ing television program. "These fish are territorial predators. They're smart fish. I always say that any size flathead you catch is a win."

Protection for large flatheads is another reason behind the James River study. Avid catfishermen like Stansbury have long been concerned about the potential overharvest of trophy flatheads because in some places there have been no size



Roy Groves of Meckling is pictured with his 94-pound, 8-ounce blue catfish (measured by grandson Gary Groves), which set a state record in 1949. It was the second record catfish Groves had caught that week.

Flathead catfish — one of three types of catfish found in South Dakota — swim predominantly in the Missouri, James and Big Sioux rivers.

Sam Stukel



limits. Schall says biologists have run some modeling based on their current research that indicates any new regulations are unlikely to result in significant changes in the number of large fish in the system. Still, the Game, Fish and Parks Commission is considering a resolution that would limit anglers to one harvested flathead per day that measures more than 28 inches.

Stansbury caught his 56-pounder in 2019 using a bullhead for bait. The fish bit at around 1 a.m., which is typical given their nocturnal nature. He battled the fish for nearly half an hour before he had it in the net.

Tom Van Kley lives in Sioux Falls and sells insurance for Mutual of Omaha by day, but many nights and weekends find him searching for trophy flatheads and blue cats. He was introduced to catfishing almost by accident. “We were walleye fishing up by Trent,” Van Kley says. “We ended up catching some red horse suckers that we cut for bait, just to see what we could catch. We were sitting by the campfire and our rods just started getting smashed by 8- to 10-pound channel cats. From that night on, catfish just got into my blood.”

Eventually he began looking for even bigger cats, but the transition wasn’t easy. “The first year that I primarily targeted flatheads I didn’t catch one all year long,” he says. “Then finally, on our last trip of the year down in Omaha, I caught two out of the Missouri River. The next year I didn’t catch one until July. But then I went out with a guy who really knew what he was doing and he kind of showed me the ropes. We just smacked them. We caught eight or nine fish that night up to 25 or 30 pounds each, and I never looked back.”

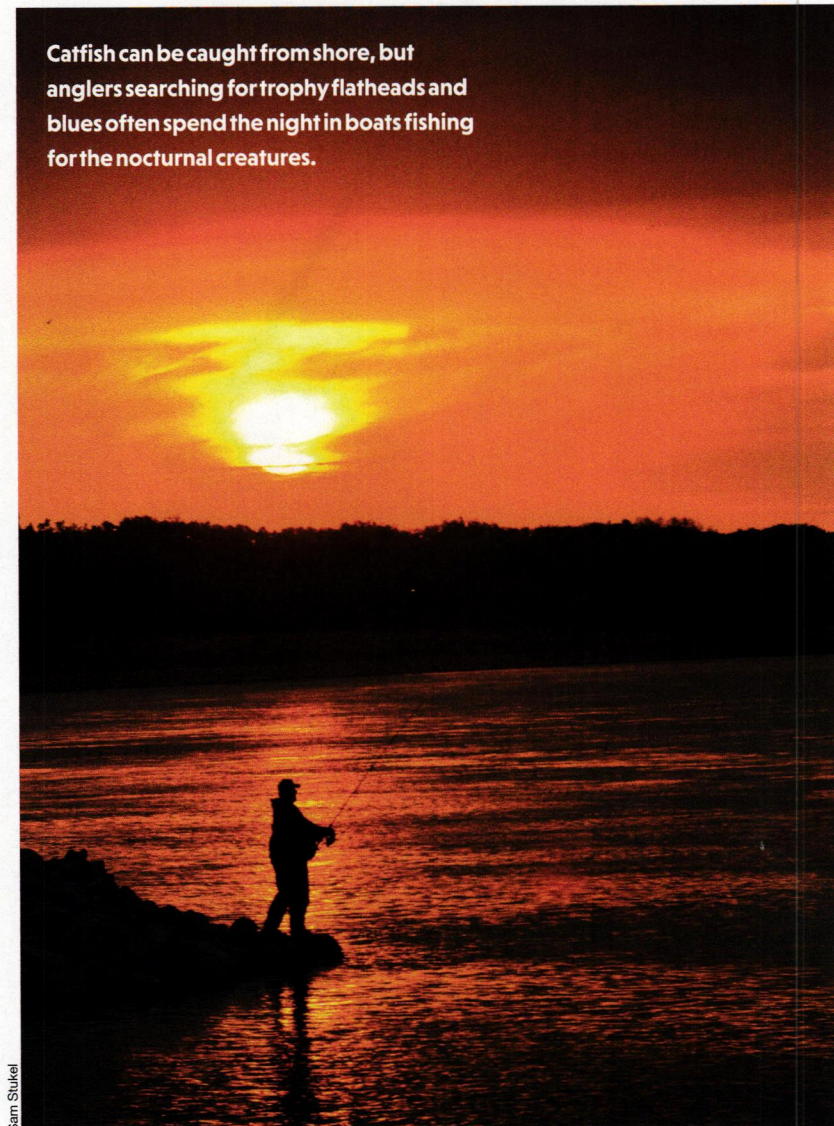
His biggest catch came during a tournament in Sioux City. He was fishing near Dakota Dunes on the lowest stretch of South Dakota’s Missouri River. “We were sitting on this spot that I thought would be pretty good, but it was midnight and we had no fish. And the weigh-in was at 2 a.m. My buddy wanted to call it a night, but I said, ‘A lot can change in two hours.’ About 35 minutes later one rod folded and we had a 20-pound fish on.”

They rebaited their hooks and waited. Then, out of the corner of his eye, he saw another rod bend. He grabbed it and less than 10 minutes later reeled in a 56-pound flathead. They won the tournament with 76 pounds of catfish. “We’re usually fishing from 7 p.m. until the sun comes up,” Van Kley says. “You put in a lot of work to catch a few fish. If you pull in three or four flatheads in a night, you did pretty good. You put a 50-pound fish on the floor and it’s pretty surreal.”

It’s a thrill that Roy Groves knew well.

GROVES AWOKE AT 5:30 on the morning of Sunday, May 22, 1949. An hour later he was unfolding his chair at one of his favorite fishing spots, about a mile north of where the James River flows into the Missouri just east of Yankton. He cast out two lines — one a 20-pound test line and the other a little

Catfish can be caught from shore, but anglers searching for trophy flatheads and blues often spend the night in boats fishing for the nocturnal creatures.



Sam Stukel

heavier — using crawfish and chub minnows for bait. “He cast from the bank into a spot that he was pretty familiar with,” says Marc Rasmussen, a senior vice president at BankWest in Pierre and Groves’ great-grandson. “He knew there had been some fish out there, but he wasn’t having a very good day. He sat there for a long time and only picked up one carp. He kept having his minnows chewed off the line, so he knew something was going on down there, but he couldn’t quite figure out what it was.”

Groves fished for nearly 12 hours that day. Shortly after 6 p.m., he put his last chub minnow on the 20-pound line and cast it out. Two minutes later, “Wham! It felt like I hooked a submarine,” he later told a local newspaper reporter.

The fish swam about 15 feet before Groves set the hook, but that didn’t faze it. The giant cat took about 100 yards of line off Groves’ reel. “She did what she wanted with the line after that,” Groves recalled. “After a half hour to 45-minute fight, she just dove to bottom and stayed there.”

Groves grabbed a pair of pliers from his tackle box and start-

ed hitting his fishing pole. The vibrations traveled along the taut fishing line, rousing the cat into another burst of swimming. Groves' hands were already bloody from trying to stop his reel. His line was quickly running out. Finally, the fish stopped fighting, and at 8:20 p.m., Groves pulled his state record 94-pound, 8-ounce blue catfish ashore.

Rasmussen remembers seeing the big blue mounted above the fireplace in Groves' home, right next to the Shakespeare rod and reel he'd used to land it. In fact, when Shakespeare heard about Groves' record-setting catch, they supplied him with new equipment for several years. "The fish was a big part of his life," Rasmussen says. "He wasn't a boastful guy, but whenever he would talk to the kids and grandkids, he'd talk a lot about how proud he was. People used to follow him around. He'd have to sneak out to go fishing because they would all try to get into his spots."

Catching one monster catfish would have been enough to secure his angling legacy, but the blue was actually the second record cat he'd caught that week. Four days earlier, and about 200 yards farther downstream on the James, he landed the channel catfish that eventually became the subject of intense scrutiny within the South Dakota fishing world.

For 70 years, fishermen, biologists, ichthyologists and anyone else intensely interested in catfishing looked at the old black and white photos of Groves standing alongside his champion channel, examined the fin structure and wondered if it wasn't really a blue catfish. "It was always presumed to be a channel cat," Rasmussen says, "and there are channel catfish that have been caught since that time in other states that have been bigger." (The current world record is a 58-pound channel taken from a reservoir in South Carolina in 1964, though there are questions about that fish, too, since the largest channel catfish generally weigh in at 30 pounds or a little more.)

"I think for many people in South Dakota, the real question was, 'How does a channel cat get to be more than 35 pounds?'" Rasmussen says. "The nature of them is to be a smaller fish. But when you look at the type of fins, the tail fins on a channel cat are a little bit sharper and the fin near the tail is squared off. They say very clearly that it's not the color of the catfish that makes that determination, but I think at that time they didn't know better."

Geno Adams began hearing the questions when he took an administrative position with Game, Fish and Parks in 2009. "Ever since then I've gotten emails or calls asking why we wouldn't turn over that state record because everyone knew that it was not identified correctly," Adams says.

He shared the photos with fisheries experts at South Dakota State University and other ichthyologists around the country. Their opinions were overwhelming. "It was resounding," he says. "It didn't take people long to look at it. They could tell by the anal fin that it was not a channel catfish. When 100

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percent of the people are instantly saying it's not a channel cat, it's time to do something. I wanted to do this for channel catfishing and channel cat fishermen. It's a pretty cool thing to have a state record, and to have this category be inactive forever because of a misidentification didn't seem just."


Game, Fish and Parks announced in May of 2019 that the channel catfish record would be voided, almost 70 years to the day since Groves pulled his trophy out of the James River. Rasmussen and other family members were initially upset, but given nearly a year to examine the evidence themselves, they've come to agree with the decision. "This is not taking away from Roy's prowess as a cat fisherman," Adams says. "He was a legitimate catfishing expert, probably one of the best cat fishermen of all time in South Dakota. He was like the godfather of catfishing in South Dakota, and we did not want to take anything away from him or the family."

The announcement coincided with the launch of Catrush 2019, a campaign designed to generate interest in catfishing. With a new state record up for grabs, anglers responded. On May 20, just three days after the record was voided, the new benchmark was set when Chuck Ewald caught an 8-pound, 3-ounce channel cat at Whitlock Bay. His record lasted only two days. It fell another six times by June 10. Drew Matthews

holds the current state record with a 30-pound, 1-ounce channel caught in a farm pond by Murdo.

Though voiding Groves' long-held record was a difficult decision, perhaps he would have been happy to see fishermen taking the same joy that he did in chasing the elusive cats. "We knew it wouldn't be the easiest thing or the most well received by those who are involved in that record, but we also knew that the vast majority of people out there were going to be happy with the decision, and that's the way it's turned out," Adams says. "I heard countless stories of people going catfishing who hadn't gone in 20 years, or they'd never gone before, and they decided they wanted to go try to catch a state record channel cat. From that aspect it was a success in highlighting channel cat fishing in South Dakota."

Even Rasmussen has gotten in on the fun. He and his wife live along Lake Oahe, where they enjoy fishing for walleye, northerns and catfish, but nothing like the behemoths that his great-grandfather caught. His biggest is a 12-pound channel. "That's enough of a thrill for an old man like me," he says.

Still, monstrous fish lurk in the murky waters of South Dakota's rivers, waiting for someone with the right combination of skill, time, patience and stamina to land them. 



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Sam Stukel

FRIED OR BLACKENED CATFISH

NOT ONLY ARE CHANNEL CATFISH good for youth and family fishing outings, they make a great meal. "There are different things you need to do to prepare them properly, but when you do those things, they're a phenomenal food fish," says Geno Adams, fisheries program administrator with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks. Here are some tips from Adams for filleting and preparing catfish.

BEFORE YOU COOK

Small to medium sized fish (12 to 20 inches) make the best meal.

Allowing blood to drain from catfish results in a whiter, cleaner fillet. Snip or cut the throat area on the underside of the catfish near where the gill covers meet. This is called the "isthmus." Place the fish in a live well or on a stringer in the water for a few minutes to allow blood to drain.

When filleting catfish, trim and discard all the dark red portions prior to cooking. The red meat has a stronger flavor and leads to the fishier taste sometimes associated with catfish.

Lay each fillet in front of you and cut them at a 45-degree angle to the lateral line into 3/4-inch strips.

FRYING CATFISH

Soak the strips in buttermilk for a few hours prior to breading. Buttermilk is mildly acidic and will tenderize meats and

remove the stronger flavors associated with darker fish such as catfish.

Remove catfish strips from buttermilk and bread fish. Many commercial dry baters are available such as Shorelunch. You can also make your own with any combination of cornmeal, flour and spices. If you like some flare, Cajun Shorelunch is especially good on catfish.

Fry fish in 350- to 375-degree peanut oil or another oil of your choice until the fish strips float on the surface of the oil and appear golden brown.

Remove fish and place on paper towel lined sheet or dish before eating.

BLACKENING CATFISH

A Southern favorite is blackened catfish. You can purchase blackening seasoning at most grocery stores or online.

Pat whole fillets dry and liberally sprinkle blackening seasoning over both sides of the catfish fillet.



Geno Adams

After properly filleting catfish, the nuggets can be fried to a golden brown.

Heat a very lightly oiled skillet (cast iron for the most authentic experience) until the oil begins to smoke.

Place fillets in the skillet. Catfish fillets will stick to the skillet at the beginning. You'll know they are ready to flip when they begin to pull away from the surface of the skillet and no longer stick. At this point, flip fillets.

Repeat on the next side until fillet is fully cooked.

Enjoy blackened catfish with beans and rice or any other preferred side dish.

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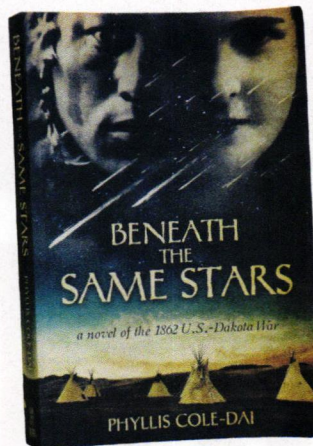
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FINDING FRIENDSHIP IN WAR

The outbreak and aftermath of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 shook the northern Plains and remains relevant today. In her first novel, *Beneath the Same Stars* (One Sky Press), Brookings author Phyllis Cole-Dai explores the conflict through the experiences of a real figure, Sarah Wakefield. The wife of a reservation doctor, Wakefield lived among the Dakota for a year before she and her two children were taken captive at the outbreak of hostilities and sheltered by a Dakota man named Časke.

For help understanding Časke and the other Dakota characters, Cole-Dai turned to Darlene Renville Pipeboy. A native Dakota speaker and descendant of Chief Gabriel Renville, one of the Sisseton-Wahpeton leaders opposed to the war, Pipeboy proved to be an invaluable collaborator. Through lengthy phone calls



and visits around Pipeboy's kitchen table in Peever, the pair discussed Dakota language and culture, enriching Cole-Dai's narrative and becoming friends in the process. "I can't imagine what writing this novel would have been like without her. I probably would have managed it, but I don't know how," Cole-Dai says.

Pipeboy even inspired the characterization of Časke's mother, whose true name has been lost to history. The Dakota woman, called Uŋčisi or "my mother-in-law" in Cole-Dai's book, was instrumental in caring for the Wakefield family during their captivity. In her own book, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, Wakefield admitted that she came to regard Časke's mother as her own. "When I think of Časke's mother, Darlene is the face I see, the voice I hear, the strength and the tenderness I feel," Cole-Dai says.



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SOUTH DAKOTA A ^{to} Z

Story by **BERNIE HUNHOFF**

LEAVE IT TO A TEACHER of fourth-graders to develop a more literary rationale. “When our class read the book *M is for Mount Rushmore* I got the idea that we should travel South Dakota, stopping at towns from A to Z,” says Vonnie Carda, who is on the faculty at Sacred Heart elementary school in Yankton.

She eventually persuaded her husband, Kevin, and their friends Matt and Tracie Dvorak to embark on a Memorial Day weekend excursion by motorhome. Kevin is a Yankton insurance agent; the Dvoraks run a physical therapy clinic called Peloton.

Every group needs a skeptic; while the other three were planning costumes, music and food, Kevin was wondering why only he was worried about where to park an RV overnight in small town South Dakota.

They finalized plans for the alphabetical adventure over dinner at Viborg’s Daneville Inn, where Matt volunteered to be the musical director. Kevin agreed to be the photographer. Tracie joined as “caterer extraordinaire” (snack buyer) and Vonnie became the writer and historian.

They developed a route with 26 stops, one for each letter of the alphabet, rented a 30-foot RV from Jack’s Campers in Mitchell and then — beginning with U for Utica — motored 1,103 miles in four days. They searched for history, humor and interesting eateries. They also created photo-puns. For example, they wore graduation caps in Yale, tinfoil hats in Roswell and fedoras in Fedora. They donned lederhosen for Hosmer because Vonnie’s

Kevin and Vonnie Carda posed by the world’s largest prairie dog, a 12-foot giant who towers over a real prairie dog colony near the Badlands town of Interior.



research had indicated that it ranks among South Dakota's most German communities.

In Epiphany, they stood with thoughtful, hand-under-chin poses by the door of a fuel delivery truck that was lettered with EPIPHANY, S.D. "What are you guys doing?" asked the curious driver.

"I'm sure a lot of the people we met wondered, 'Who are these guys?'" laughs Vonnie, but she says they met "nothing but friendly" locals. "The pride that people have in their towns is something to experience, and you find history everywhere you go in South Dakota."

Matt Dvorak agrees. "The people we met in the towns all along the way, that's the magic of South Dakota," he says. "We expected to see beautiful scenery and history, but the people and the stories they tell are the most memorable part of the trip."

Local foods were also a favorite discovery. They heartily recommend the boar osso buco (barbecued shank from wild pigs) at Custer's Buglin' Bull, and the German fare of north-central South Dakota. "Simple foods from hidden-away places were the best," Vonnie says. However, the travelers are still perplexed by the waitress who enticed them with a special price on her cafe's 75-cent wings — "10 for \$7.50." Did the Yanktonians really look that poor at math?

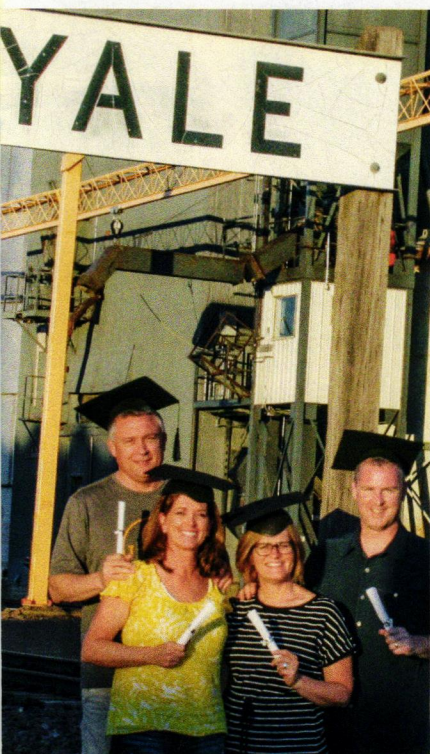
Much to Kevin's relief, parking the motorhome was never a problem. Even the smallest towns had good



The Cardas (left) and Dvoraks donned lederhosen to honor the Hosmer area's rich German heritage.

locations. "When we got caught in a heavy downpour in Custer, we just pulled into the grocery store lot and waited it out," says Matt.

The 26-town trip created enough shared stories and laughter to last until the Cardas and Dvoraks create another South Dakota road game. "A big thing we learned," says Matt, "is that you can plan a trip across the country or even around the world and it might be great, but most of us haven't even seen and experienced all there is to enjoy right here in our own state." 🐾



The A-Z TRIP

These are the Yankton foursome's favorite memories from each town. However, they stress that every traveler will find their own places and stories. That's the fun of exploring new roads.

ATHOL (the name itself)
BELLE FOURCHE (Branding Iron Social Club)
CACTUS FLAT (prairie dog sculpture)
DIMOCK (cheese factory)
EPIPHANY (pioneer clinic history)
FEDORA (taking a hats picture)
GETTYSBURG (founded by Civil War vets)
HOSMER (Germans-from-Russia culture)
IROQUOIS (post office dates to 1880)
JAVA (still a coffee town)
KEYSTONE (fudge shop)
LEBANON (Longbranch saloon)
MOBRIDGE (Oscar Howe murals)

NEMO (limestone cliffs)
ORIENT (license on hearse reads LAST RIDE)
PRINGLE (elk capital of S.D.)
QUINN (quaint and quiet)
ROSWELL (they were the only aliens in town)
SPEARFISH (a canyon like no place else)
TOLSTOY (the book is bigger than the town)
UTICA (means "dweller" in Sioux)
VALE (mountain view but no skiing)
WAKPALA (chosen because it's fun to pronounce)
X (X marks the nation's center near Belle Fourche)
YALE (educated by a charming waitress)
ZELL (old convent town has no Sunday services)

The teacher and her fellow travelers got an education in the tiny town of Yale.

Artistic Dreams Collide at the Kokomo Inn

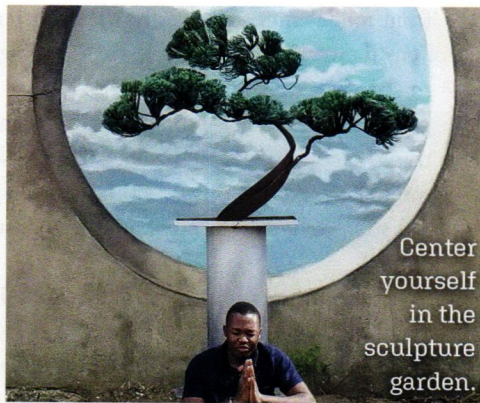
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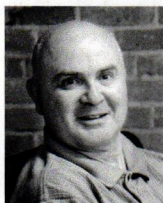
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SERIOUSLY, FOLKS

By Roger Holtzmann

A STORM BY ANY OTHER NAME

ATLAS, from Greek mythology, was skilled in philosophy, mathematics and astronomy, but no one remembers him for that stuff. He is known as the not-very-bright brute condemned to hold up the sky after he and his fellow Titans were defeated by Zeus and the upstart Olympians. I'm not sure who was holding the sky up before that.

Not that the defeat has hurt the big guy's career. Atlas' name is attached to everything from model trains to tires to pasta cutters. Zeus/Jupiter, meanwhile, doesn't have squat to show for his victory over the Titans. A planet is named after him, which is something, but it's not one of the cool planets. No intelligent life. No rings. Nothing but a big red spot. What's that compared to a pasta cutter?

Atlas earned another accolade in 2012 when his name was attached to the ferocious October blizzard that dropped record breaking amounts of snow across a wide swath of South Dakota. I remembered the event and its horrific aftermath, but I didn't realize the beast had a *name* until singer/songwriter Eliza Blue referred to Winter Storm Atlas in our last issue as the genesis of her short story *Town Death*.

I asked around the office and learned that naming winter storms is now a thing, which was news to me. My only consolation is that this is mostly being pushed by the Weather Channel and isn't really an "official" policy; the National Weather Service (NWS)

and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are sticking with the tried and true system of calling winter storms Barely A Blizzard (BAB), Big But Not That Big Of A Blizzard (BBNTBOAB) and A Hellaciously Horrendous Blizzard That Might Keep You Housebound For A Week (AHHBTMKYHFAW).

Named weather events and disasters aren't unprecedented in South Dakota. We've been on a first name basis with floods and forest fires, locusts and boils, fiery hail and blimp explosions, rivers turned to blood, tornadoes and blizzards, stretching back to the infamous Children's Blizzard of 1888.

Upon further consideration ... I just realized a couple of the bad things mentioned above didn't actually happen here, but I've probably forgotten a few disasters so it's a wash. Never let the facts interfere with a cor-kin' good sentence, I always say.

Winter Storm Atlas could be considered in that line except for the fact that we would never have come up with such a name on our own. As a rule, we're pretty straightforward when it comes to naming things. We've borrowed place names from the Nakota/Dakota/Lakota. Cadged names from the Bible, from back east and the various old countries from whence we came. There are a bunch of towns named after railroad bigwigs and their wives. We've got streets and counties named for characters who in no way deserve such an honor and towns named for guys whose only distinction was that they got there first. For

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the most part, you don't need to expend much mental energy to trace the origin or meaning of our place names.


There are exceptions, of course. Take Pedro, in Haakon County, Ralph, in Harding County, or Virgil, in Beadle County. Were they founded by humble sorts who thought it would be presumptuous to attach their family names to a town, or by individuals so widely known — like Napoleon or Cher — that only one name was needed to identify them?

Last but not least, I must mention my favorite place name in South Dakota: Eureka. Was there something so exceptional about the McPherson County site that its founders were moved to exclaim "Eureka!" upon spying it the first time? Did the name come to its founder while he was taking a bath? Archimedes and I want to know.

I seem to have lost my thread, as is often ... ah, yes. If we had named Winter Storm Atlas it would be remembered as the Cattleman's Blizzard. Or maybe Denny Sanford would have bought the naming rights. All I know for certain is it wouldn't be Atlas.

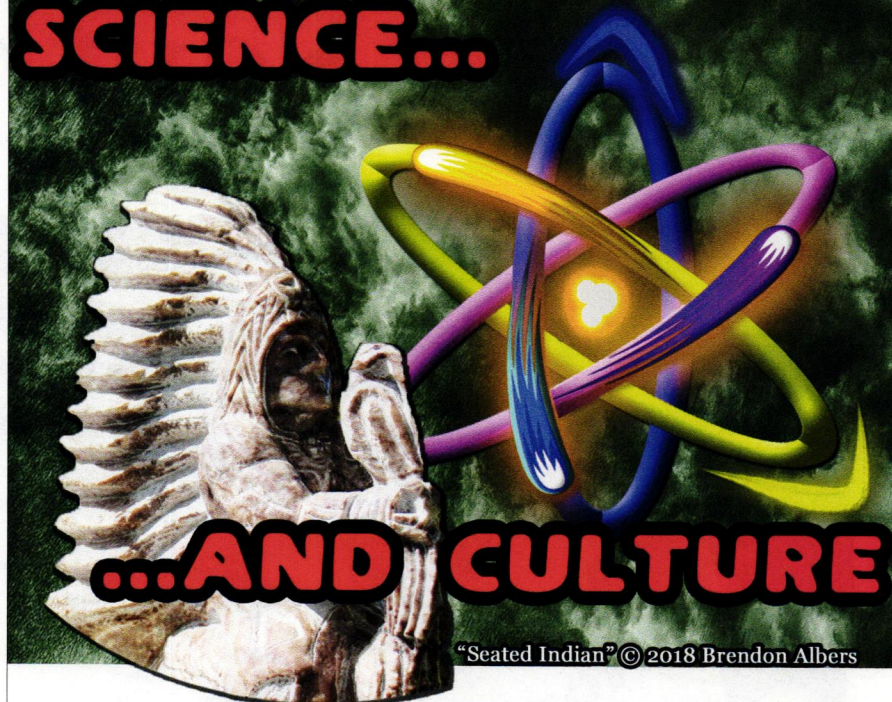
I've always wanted to be one of those guys who stages a press conference and calls for complicated, intrusive, impractical and occasionally illegal action to solve a problem that isn't really much of a problem. So this is where I will make my stand. **RESOLVED:** The State of South Dakota hereby and henceforth reserves unto itself the sovereign right to name all weather events that occur partly or wholly within its borders.

Pretty cool, huh? Honestly, I would have made one heck of a lawyer. I love spinning out unnecessarily complex sentences that use 35 words to say what could easily have been said with 10. Ah, well.

We're going to need a way to pick names and decide which weather events and natural disasters are significant enough to merit names and which will merely be called thunderstorms, grass fires, floods, etc. Since this whole thing was my idea, I hereby nominate myself for the job. If you would like to see your name attached to an earthquake or blizzard drop me a line. 

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

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Bernie Huhoff

The Old Courthouse Museum in Sioux Falls welcomes visitors to renew the suffrage fight with a new exhibit.

Suffrage Trail



A century after the 19th amendment became law, here's a guide to the people and places in South Dakota that helped women win the right to vote

Story by **JOHN ANDREWS**

IN EARLY DECEMBER OF 1918, Marie Gipper, a 22-year-old bride to be, walked into the clerk of courts office in Mitchell and bought a marriage license for \$1. She said her fiance was simply too busy to do it himself. The transaction proved momentous, and its significance did not go unnoticed. It was the first marriage license ever purchased by a woman in Davison County. South Dakotans read about it in newspapers across the state.

Women in South Dakota were just embarking on a new era of firsts. The following month, three women were sworn in to appointed positions at the capitol in Pierre — Mae Andrews as bill clerk for the House, Marguerite Karcher Sahr as reading clerk for the Senate and Grace Hanson as reading clerk for the House — all because in November of 1918 South Dakota voters approved women's suffrage.

The road had not been easy. Though many South Dakotans were open to suffrage, it was defeated in six previous statewide elections, and numerous other bills were quashed in the state and territorial legislatures dating back to 1868. May Billingshurst, an active suf-

frage advocate from Pierre, watched as the three women took their oaths and later explained her feelings in a letter to Mamie Shields Pyle of Huron, longtime president of the South Dakota Universal Franchise League. "I could not help but wonder if they realized who made it possible for them to attain those places," she said. "As I glanced around at the older suffrage women looking on I imagined I could see in their faces happiness and then sadness and a faraway look that told of the long struggle."

Congress approved the 19th amendment, guaranteeing women's suffrage throughout the country, in 1919. It became law in 1920 upon ratification by the required 36 states. To help commemorate the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage, Gov. Kristi Noem assembled the Women's Vote Centennial Delegation, which is planning several events throughout 2020. South Dakotans can also visit a number of places — historical homes, theaters and museum exhibits, for example — that were important to the suffrage movement or help explain the campaign to 21st century audiences. Here's a guide to a few spots along South Dakota's suffrage trail.



THE PINK CASTLE

THEY CALLED HIM NAMES in Congress, yet John Pickler and his wife Alice remained staunch women's suffrage advocates. Their home, a 20-room mansion on the south edge of Faulkton affectionately called the Pink Castle for its unusual color, stands as a tribute to the Picklers and their contributions to the movement.

Pickler was one of 13 men who read about the Dakota Land Boom, came to the territory and founded Faulkton in 1882. He and Alice built a claim shanty that was significantly upgraded 10 years later when the railroad routed through Faulkton in-



Katie Hunhoff photos



Jody Moritz, Linda Bartholomew and other Faulkton volunteers maintain the Pickler family home as a museum.

stead of the nearby county seat of LaFoon. Most of LaFoon's buildings moved to Faulkton, including a two-story hotel that was attached to the Pickler home. When remodeling was done in 1894, local artist Charles Greener — who made ends meet by painting houses — chose the unique exterior color that lies somewhere between salmon and coral.

John opened a law office, served in the territorial legislature and was elected one of South Dakota's first congressmen after statehood in 1889. Alice became one of South Dakota's most outspoken suffragists. She served as president of the South Dakota Equal Suffrage Association and vice president of both the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the South Dakota Universal Franchise League.

The Picklers were united behind the cause of suffrage and hosted national leaders like Susan B. Anthony at the Pink Castle. "He was the only congressman who actually spoke for suffrage," says Jody Moritz, a member of the Faulk County Historical Society and tour guide at the Pickler Mansion. "A newspaper in Washington, D.C., called him, 'Petticoats Pickler,' because they said he was hiding behind the skirts of his

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE THROUGH TIME

1868: Enos Stutsman introduces the first woman suffrage bill in Dakota Territory. The Territorial Council defeats the measure 7-6.

1879: Captain Nelson Miner proposes a women's suffrage bill that passes the Territorial Council, but fails in the House by one vote.

1883: Matilda Joselyn Gage, a national leader in the suffrage movement, embarks upon a lecture tour of Dakota Territory.



wife and daughter. Another article called him, 'Susan B. Pickler.' So he asked Susan B. at her birthday what she thought of that, and she said, 'I'm honored.'"

John died in 1910, and Alice in 1932. Their home passed among family members until it was deeded to the Faulk County Historical Society in 1987. Volunteers cataloged 585,000 pieces that summer before the home opened as a museum in June 1988. Everything inside belonged to the Picklers, including a collection of 5,000 books highlighted by a copy of *History of Woman Suffrage*, signed by Susan B. Anthony, who authored it with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Matilda Joselyn Gage and Ida Husted Harper.

The Pickler Mansion is open from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. daily from Memorial Day through Labor Day. One-hour guided tours are offered for \$10.



THE PYLE POWERHOUSE

THE PYLE HOUSE in Huron stands not only as a tribute to the work that Mamie Shields Pyle undertook to gain suffrage in South Dakota, but also to her daughter Gladys, the first woman to serve in the state legislature, South Dakota's first female Secretary of State and the state's first woman to win election to the U.S. Senate.

1885: John Pickler's bill for women's suffrage passes the Territorial House, but is vetoed by Gov. Gilbert Pierce. Susan B. Anthony remarks that Pierce should go down in history for his acts of cruelty against the women of Dakota.

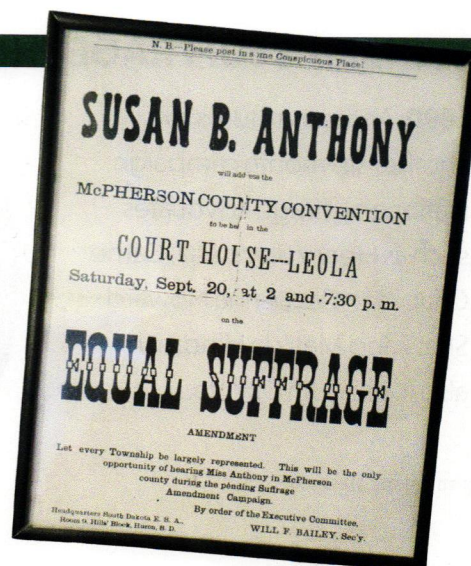
1889: Anthony arrives for a nine-month suffrage campaign throughout South Dakota. The South Dakota Equal Suffrage Association is also organized in Huron.



Rachel Farrell tends to the Pyle House in Huron, home of two generations of influential women in South Dakota politics.

Mamie and her husband John, an attorney and politician, built their Queen Anne style house at 376 Idaho Ave. SE in 1894. John served as the state attorney general from 1899 until his death at age 41 from typhoid fever in 1902. Not long after that, Mamie became involved in the fight for suffrage in South Dakota. "She was walking by a polling place and saw a man holding up a ballot and telling all these workers — some of whom couldn't read or write — what to vote for," says Rachel Farrell, executive director of Huron's Dakotaland Museum. "He was threatening their jobs if they didn't vote the right way. Mamie got upset, and that's really what got her started in the suffrage movement."

She became the leader of the South Dakota Universal Franchise League after a suffrage referendum failed in 1910 and served as its president through South Dakota's ratification of the 19th Amendment during a special legislative session in December of 1919. "Mamie spent three days and nights on



the phone trying to get the 19th amendment ratified,” Farrell says. “The governor didn’t appropriate any more funding for these legislators to get to Pierre during a blizzard, so she had to work day and night to get these guys there on their own dime so South Dakota would be part of the two-thirds majority needed to ratify.”

The Pyle House is open by appointment. Guided tours are offered for a freewill donation.



Hot Springs Area Chamber of Commerce

The wide veranda spanning the length of the Evans Hotel in Hot Springs was attractive for speakers hoping to draw a crowd. The sandstone hotel is now an apartment complex.

EVANS HOTEL

HOT SPRINGS IS KNOWN for its sandstone architecture. Among the most impressive examples is the five-story Evans Hotel, built in 1892 by early town booster Fred Evans and the site of numerous suffrage gatherings.

Speakers especially loved the large veranda, which faces River Street. In July of 1896, national suffragist leader Clara Colby addressed a “fair-sized audience,” in front of the hotel, according to the *Hot Springs Weekly Star*, whose writer described her as, “a very talented, interesting speaker, whom it is always a pleasure to hear.”

“It was a big deal for women to speak publicly on the street like that at the time,” says Liz Almlie. “But several specifically said it was important to do in order to reach a wider audience than would come to a church or auditorium for a scheduled lecture.”

Colby was born in Britain but moved to Wisconsin as a child. She attended the University of Wisconsin, where she worked to help women gain admission to the school. She married Leonard Colby, a Civil War veteran, and moved to Beatrice, Nebraska, where she founded *The Woman’s Tribune*, at one time an official publication of the National Woman Suffrage Association. Colby also edited a section of the *Beatrice Express* called “Woman’s Work.”

Colby was in demand nationally as a suffrage speaker. She was away on one such tour in December of 1890 when her husband, who commanded a regiment of the Nebraska National Guard, was called to assist Seventh Cavalry troops at Wounded Knee. Four days after the Wounded Knee Massacre, Colby found a Lakota infant, shielded from the harsh winter weather under the body of her dead mother. Colby adopted the baby, known as Lost Bird. Eventually, he moved to California with Lost Bird and the child’s nurse. The Colbys divorced in 1906.

The hotel, now called The Evans, has been converted to one-bedroom and studio apartments.

WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE THROUGH TIME

1890: Anthony returns for another six-month campaign. National suffrage advocates such as Henry Blackwell, Carrie Chapman Catt, Anna Howard Shaw and Matilda Hindman also tour South Dakota.



1894: Alice Pickler is among a delegation of suffragists who speak before the judiciary committee of the U.S. House of Representatives.

1897: Gov. Andrew Lee signs a bill that places suffrage on the November 1898 ballot.

1898: Suffrage is defeated by 3,000 votes in the statewide election.



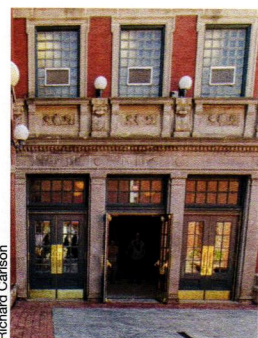
HOMESTAKE OPERA HOUSE

THE PAINT WAS BARELY DRY inside the Homestake Opera House in Lead when the grand venue hosted national suffrage advocate and eventual Nobel Peace Prize winner Jane Addams.

Addams is perhaps best known for her work bridging the gap between social classes at Hull House in Chicago, which she established in 1889. She was also an officer in the National American Women's Suffrage Association and embarked on a speaking tour that included a stop at the Deadwood Theater in October 1914. When women in Lead heard that Addams was visiting the Black Hills, they convinced her to speak at the new opera house before she left South Dakota.

Two years later, during the suffrage campaign of 1916, the opera house hosted the "Flying Squadron," a tour led by Elsie Benedict of Denver, the Rev. Effie McCollum Jones of Iowa and Emma Smith DeVoe of Washington. In August of 1916, they were joined by Rose Bower, the suffragist from Rapid City who famously played her cornet to attract attention to their speeches.

The Homestake Opera House was built in 1914 through



Richard Carlson



Melissa Godber, an interpreter at the Old Courthouse Museum in Sioux Falls, demonstrates how visitors can become part of an early 20th century suffrage rally.

Suffrage Selfie

AN EXHIBIT AT THE Old Courthouse Museum in Sioux Falls lets visitors demonstrate alongside the women who led the suffrage cause. Guests are encouraged to hold signs and snap a selfie against a large photographic backdrop that depicts a suffrage gathering from the early 1900s.

The museum's exhibit, called "The Bottle and the Ballot," demonstrates the close connection between the suffrage and prohibition movements. "I think a lot of people looked at them both as women's issues," says Kevin Gansz, curator of education for Siouxland Heritage Museums. "Women were obviously for suffrage, but at the same time, a lot of people leading the charge for prohibition were women, especially here in South Dakota. A lot of people wanted to see prohibition happen in this new state, and they thought if women were given the right to vote, it would have a better chance of passing."

The exhibit highlights major players in the South Dakota suffrage movement, such as Mamie Shields Pyle, Gov. Peter Norbeck and Belle Leavitt, a suffrage leader in Minnehaha County who became active in the League of Women Voters after passage of the 19th amendment.

1900: Sen. Richard Pettigrew presents a petition in the U.S. Senate calling for a 16th amendment for suffrage.

1902: Advocates try to gather petition signatures to place suffrage on the ballot in 1904 under the state's new initiative clause, but Secretary of State O.C. Berg rules that the initiative cannot be used for constitutional amendments.

1903: Suffrage fails in a House committee.

1907: Suffrage passes in the state Senate, but fails in the House.





The Cultural Heritage Center's exhibit in Pierre examines the impact of women's suffrage into the 21st century.

Suffrage Today

"The Right is Ours," an interactive women's suffrage exhibit at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre, focuses on the movement from the Seneca Falls convention in 1848 through passage of the 19th amendment in 1920, but it doesn't stop there. More modern topics like the Equal Rights Amendment and the Women's March of 2017 in Washington, D.C. — which inspired similar marches in South Dakota and other states — are also explored. "It didn't stop in 1920," says Peter Kleinpas, curator of exhibits. "Just because suffrage was granted in 1920, there are still a lot of issues with voting and women's rights."

Visitors can create their own suffrage banners and toggle through a list of prominent South Dakotans and guess whether or not they had the right to vote at various points in state history. The exhibit will remain open through Election Day of 2020.

the beneficence of Phoebe Apperson Hearst, whose husband, George, was a principal investor in the Homestake Mining Company. Though George died in 1891, Phoebe remained committed to community improvements. The opera house included a 1,016-seat auditorium, a pool, bowling alley, library, billiard room and space for social gatherings.

Fire destroyed much of the building in 1984, but the community has rallied behind a slow but steady rehabilitation. The Gold Camp Players stage community theater productions and staff-led tours are available by calling (605) 584-2067.



THE GRAND OPERA HOUSE

ALMOST AS SOON as women began advocating for suffrage, an anti-suffrage movement blossomed. "Antis" held their own campaigns and rallies and ultimately clashed during a tour through South Dakota that included a stop at the Grand Opera House in Pierre in 1916.

The opera house, built in 1906 by Charles Hyde, had been the site of several notable suffrage events during its first decade. Fola LaFollette, an actress and daughter of Wisconsin governor and Progressive presidential candidate Robert LaFollette, spoke at the opera house in July 1910 and Catharine Waugh McCulloch, a suffragist and lawyer from Chicago, stopped in 1914.

In 1916, anti-suffragists embarked on a two-week tour of South Dakota cities just before the election (South Dakotans were set to vote on a suffrage amendment that year). Lucy Price, representing the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, spoke at the Pierre opera house on Nov. 2. Men and women who joined the anti-suffrage cause did so because they thought giving women the right to vote would threaten traditional family and gen-

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE THROUGH TIME

1909: A suffrage amendment with property qualifications passes in the state Senate but fails in the House. Suffragists amend a House bill that would have allowed women to vote on prohibition only to include full suffrage, which passes and is placed on the 1910 ballot.

1910: Suffrage is defeated in the statewide election by 20,000 votes.

1913: Suffrage passes the state legislature and is placed on the 1914 ballot.

1914: Jane Addams arrives in October for a short speaking tour in the Black Hills. The following month, the suffrage amendment is defeated for the third time.



der norms. Some antis saw voting as a duty rather than a right, and believed women should focus on their homes and children.

To counter the antis' message, Elsie Benedict, a newspaper reporter from Denver who had been touring the country in support of suffrage, began following them. As Price spoke inside the opera house, Benedict stood in a car at the corner of Capitol and Upper Pierre Street and held her own stump speech. She did the same outside the Goss Opera House in Watertown, and in Brookings she led a troupe of suffrage supporters into theaters and auditoriums where the antis held rallies. "Her countertactics to the antis' tour that year were probably the most confrontational events in South Dakota suffrage history," says Liz Almlie, a historic preservation specialist with the South Dakota Historical Society and women's suffrage scholar.

Pierre's Grand Opera House served as the city's movie theater from 1919 to 1978, when it was converted to a live theater venue. Today it is home to the Pierre Players community theater group.

STATE CAPITOL

SUFFRAGE HAD BEEN A TOPIC during several legislative sessions before construction began on the current capitol building in 1905. After its completion in 1910, women packed the galleries at every session of the decade as male lawmakers debated women's right to vote.

In 1911, suffragists filled the lobby of the House, handing out red carnations to legislators who promised support for the suffrage bill proposed by Sen. Dennis Henault, a bachelor from Custer. Reporters noted that women, "pleaded with tears

in their eyes for the ballot," and that even Henault grew emotional when defending his bill, which was ultimately defeated.

Women were there as subsequent suffrage bills were introduced. In 1913, suffragists tried to distance themselves from Prohibition, an issue that had been closely tied to suffrage. In 1915, advocates proposed a municipal suffrage bill that did not require a public vote. Both failed.

In 1917, a suffrage bill passed and was later amended at a special session in March, at the direction of Gov. Peter Norbeck, to require all voters be full citizens. Previous policy had al-



Women opposed to suffrage made their voices heard at Pierre's Grand Opera House.



Women packed the galleries of the state capitol over a century ago to watch legislators debate their right to vote. Liz Almlie, a suffrage scholar and historic preservationist in Pierre, is researching and keeping their stories.

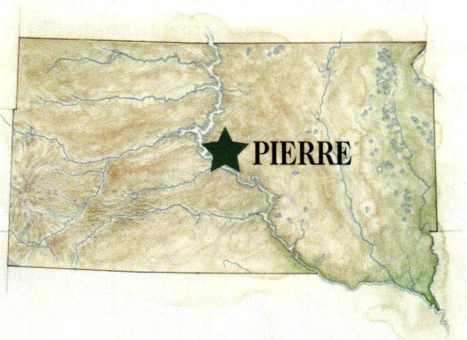
1915: Suffragists pursue a limited suffrage bill that would not require inclusion on the general election ballot, but the measure is defeated in the Senate. Instead, a full suffrage bill passes and is placed on the 1916 ballot.

1916: Suffrage leaders launch the Flying Squadron campaign, with stops planned in at least two dozen South Dakota cities. Anti-suffrage proponents counter with a two-week tour before the election. Despite early reports of suffrage's passage, the amendment fails by nearly 5,000 votes.

1917: After polling both houses for support, a universal suffrage bill is introduced and passes, placing the measure again on the ballot for 1918.

lowed immigrants to vote simply by filing their intent to become citizens, but that was seen as a security threat as the United States entered World War I. This amended bill was approved in the 1918 general election.

Women returned to the capitol in January of 1919. A general meeting of the state's women voters was held while the legislature was in session. Alice Lorraine Daly, head of the Department of Public Speaking at the Madison State Normal School, was invited to address legislators from the Senate rostrum, the first time a woman had ever done so.



HIPPLE HOUSE

JOHAN AND RUTH HIPPLE were already influential figures in Pierre by the time they built their Prairie-style home at 219 N. Highland Ave., in 1913. John had founded the State Publishing Company in 1888, sold it five years later and then launched the Hipple Printing Company. In 1905, he took over the *Pierre Weekly and Daily Capital Journal*, serving as its editor and publisher until his death in 1939.

Ruth utilized her experience from working in the family business to edit the *South Dakota Messenger* — the voice of the women's suffrage movement in the state — from September 1913 to the election of 1914. The *Messenger* included articles from Lydia Johnson, an attorney from Fort Pierre, who

wrote about legal issues affecting women and children.

Hipple also served as chair of press and publicity during the state suffrage campaigns of 1916 and 1918. In November 1918, South Dakota voters passed a state-level amendment that guaranteed suffrage. Ruth Hipple expressed her over-



Ruth Hipple coordinated the suffrage campaign's media efforts from the home in Pierre where she and her husband, John, lived.

whelming joy in a letter to Mamie Shields Pyle. "It is almost too much to have suffrage and the end of the war come on the same day," she wrote. "I feel more like crying than anything else. The cars are flying about town with flags waving and horns tooting and all the children are yelling their heads off. I have to go wipe my nose and eyes and thank God for it all every little while."

The Hipple home, on the National Register of Historic Places since 2001, is a private residence.

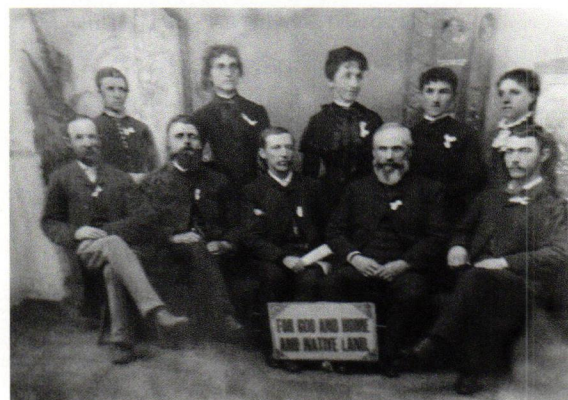
For more information and upcoming events, visit South Dakota Women's Vote Celebration on Facebook.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE THROUGH TIME

1918: Suffrage passes with 64 percent of the vote. South Dakota becomes the 17th state to approve full suffrage for women.

1919: Congress passes the 19th Amendment. Thirty-six states must ratify for it to become law. South Dakota's legislature meets in special session on Dec. 4 and votes to ratify.

1920: Tennessee becomes the 36th state to ratify. The 19th Amendment becomes law.



Matilda's Parlor in Aberdeen

MATILDA JOSLYN GAGE was a New York suffragist, often mentioned in the same breath as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony as national leaders of the movement. She spent little time in South Dakota, yet the Dacotah Prairie Museum in Aberdeen features a recreation of the suffragist parlor she kept inside her home in Fayetteville, New York.

Her son, Thomas Clarkson Gage, was a pioneer of Aberdeen, and her daughter, Maud, married L. Frank Baum, the author of *The Wizard of Oz* and onetime Aberdeen businessman. Thomas Clarkson Gage's daughter, also named Matilda, lived in a little house on Kline Street until her death in 1986. Before that, however, she donated several of her grandmother's possessions to the museum in hopes that an exhibit honoring the elder Matilda's role in the suffrage movement might someday take shape.

The exhibit in Gallery N features several original items,



including Gage's chair, a straw-stuffed sofa, grandmother clock, tea table, draperies and a chandelier that retracted into the ceiling. Lora Schaunaman, the museum's curator of exhibits, says the room became a focal point of the suffrage movement. "When the suffragists were getting close to winning enough votes in Congress and Matilda was still alive, the opposition in the Senate and House got enough support to pass a law saying that suffragists could no longer meet in public buildings," Schaunaman says. "They hoped that would be the death of the movement, because so many meetings had been held in schools and churches. But instead, they just started meeting in peoples' parlors, and Matilda's was pretty much the northeast coast connection. If any suffragists were anywhere in the area, they ended up in her parlor, holding meetings, talking about strategy and writing speeches. They couldn't outlaw her from being in her own house."

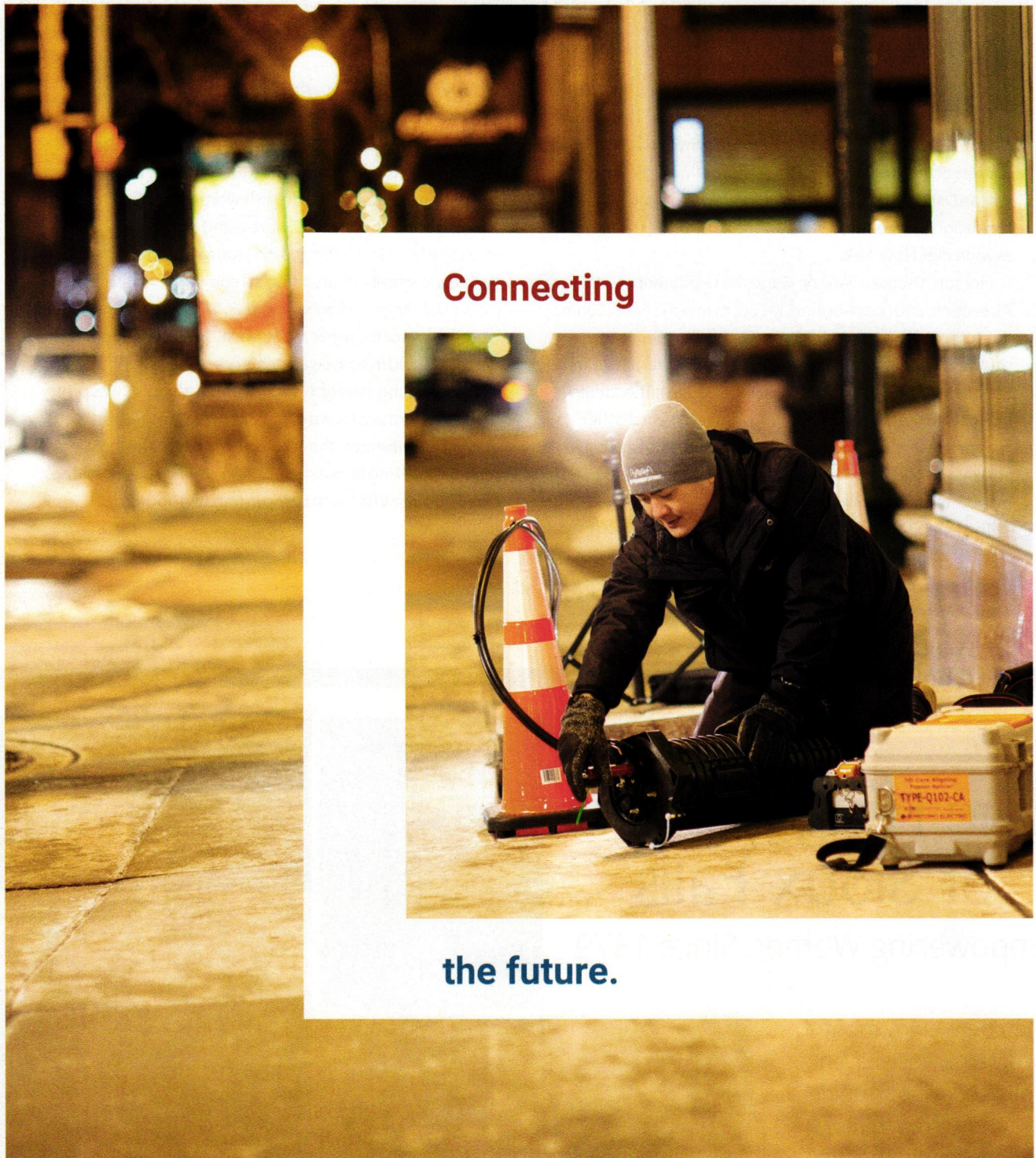
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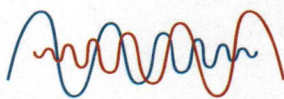


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anniversary of *Smithsonian* magazine. Adams Museum, Days of '76 Museum and Historic Adams House, Deadwood. 722-4800.

April 15: **A Night at the Brewseum.** Social, Carriage Gallery tours, beer and entertainment by Deadwood Alive reenactors. Reservations required. Days of '76 Museum, Deadwood. 722-4800.

April 17-18: **Lakota Omniciye Wacipi.** Grand entry, warm-up, speakers, social dancing and buffalo feed. Young Center, Black Hills State University, Spearfish. 642-6578.

April 17-18: **Will Lantis Yellow Jacket Stampede.** Seven Down Arena, Spearfish. 642-6852.

April 18: **Spring Fling Home and Garden Show.** Mueller Civic Center, Hot Springs. 745-4140.

April 23: **Deadwood's Historic Adams House: The Rest of the Story.** Learn what to expect next time you tour the Historic

Adams House. Homestake Adams Research and Cultural Center, Deadwood. 722-4800.

April 23-25: **Black Hills Dance Festival.** Workshops, performances and social dancing. Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City. 355-0013.

April 23-26: **Stepping Out.** Community theater performance. Matthews Opera House, Spearfish. 642-7973.

April 25: **Patsy's Day.** Honor Patsy, the beloved terrier of William Emery Adams, with a donation of dog or cat food and receive free admission. Benefits the Twin City Animal Shelter. Historic Adams House, Deadwood. 578-3724.

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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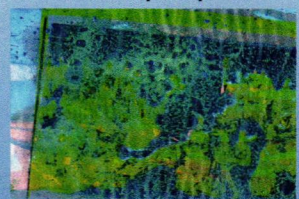
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Dana Crooks, *untitled*






Diana Behl, *past - present*



Alice Berry, *13-0-90*

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POETRY

Spring Pen

Cotton blanket draped on my cold knees
Quiet pen crawls across the page
Winter morning gray and quiet
A dark icicle in my hand

Then one day a new sound ringing
The birds are talking outside
Flying, chirping, calling, whirling
A rosy pink and yellow paints the land

My pen is faster
Shaking, swirling
The sun is rising
Like a fog that creeps, rolls in while you sleep
Spring has roused winter's nap

The birds know it's turning
After deep black months so still
We can fly again
I throw open my window to let in their chatter
And write with a new season dawning

*Jenny Roth
Roscoe, S.D.*

Deuel County Flocks

Spring-embodied, pressed to sodden, tawny fields
Spangled among reeds;
Still more pierced within the air,
Sprayed against cloud cover like spilled pepper.

Multitudes of them now sluicing northward,
Numberless pilgrims,
And to say they are honking
Would be as if to say a church choir is guffawing.

Rather they (the fleshy-feathered and pink-footed)
Proclaim the transcendent and wonder at it —
Their throats promised, astonished,
Then stilled by the vault wherein they surge.

*Thomas E. Simmons
Vermillion, S.D.*



Trees silhouetted against a Black Hills sunset. Photo by Bonny Fleming

Ode to a Prairie Night

I find her in the slough near twilight.
The brockle-faced cow has had a fine calf.
I get too close and she comes after me.
Putting some fast distance between us,
I start back to the truck, startled as
a pheasant rises, trumpeting his alarm.
I wonder what it must feel like to glide
over the prairie on feathered wings.
Leaning against the truck, I wait.
I watch as a jet stitches a golden seam
high above the darkening earth.
A glory of geese goes gabbling by,
followed minutes later by a single goose,
honking a plaintive, *Wait! Wait for me!*
A vast stillness of stars appears,
paling in anticipation as the moon rises,
seeming to perch atop the pine tree
in Grandpa Benson's old fencerow.
Off to the west, with a bark and a howl,
a coyote practices his ode to the night.

Mac was back from the Cities last week.
"Don't know why you stayed," he said.
"Nothing interesting ever happens here."
And I smile, remembering: the only thing
Mac and I ever really agreed about was that
Sue Ellen was the prettiest girl in school.

*VerLynn Kneifl
Crofton, Neb.*



OUR WILD SIDE



That's a Mouthful ... Opossums are nocturnal, so perhaps that's why this critter, caught in the early morning light after a busy night in Flandreau, let out a big yawn. It's also a good chance to see his tiny, sharp teeth. Opossums have 50 teeth, more than any other North American land mammal. Their range has expanded as forests were cleared for settlement. Southeastern South Dakota is now the very northwestern edge of 'possum country.

— Photo by Bruce Porisch

SWEET SPRING

Humans aren't the only creatures delighted to see pasqueflowers in spring. The tiny purple flowers — among the first to bloom in South Dakota — are an important source of pollen for female bees seeking provisions for their nests. Pasqueflowers track the sun during the day, creating a warm atmosphere in the chilly months of spring for pollinators to heat their bodies. Because temperatures fluctuate in March and April, it's not uncommon to see bees forcing their way into flowers that haven't opened on particularly cool days.

Photo by Christian Begeman




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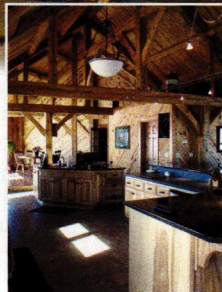
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Bruce Porisch

Heard, Not Seen

American woodcocks have been found in the Big Sioux River Valley and other forested areas of far eastern South Dakota, the very western fringe of their range. They're tough to spot because their brown, mottled plumage blends so well with grass and leaves found on the forest floor and because they are nocturnal. A birder's best bet is to listen for males in the spring at dusk, as they perform a mating ritual called the sky dance, which involves spiraling flights, chirps and a twittering sound as air flows through their wingtips.



Kara Herman

Treed Bird

Allyn Brosz was driving his niece, Kara Herman, around the Hutchinson County homesteads where their family settled when she spotted a ringneck pheasant perched in a tree. "Pheasants don't fly up a tree," Brosz said, but then had to eat crow when he saw the photo that Herman snapped about 8 miles northeast of Tripp. Though they can fly quickly for short distances, pheasants spend most of their lives on the ground and are rarely seen in trees.

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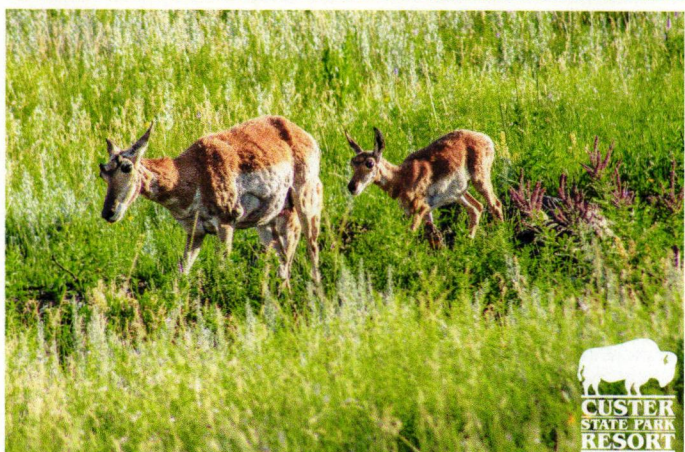


'Just Listen'

I grew up near the Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge. About this time of the year, my dad would say, "Jerry, let's go for a ride." That usually meant a ride around the refuge or the countryside to see if we could spot a few migrants or resident pheasants. As the days grew longer and snow disappeared, it always meant a ride to see if we could spy migrating geese. All of the other migrants were okay with Dad, but the Canada goose represented the ultimate in our shared experience.

In the spring, the geese had become less wary, and it was not uncommon to drive within a few feet of them. "Open the window," Dad would say in a near-whisper. "Let's listen to them." We would sit quietly and listen as the big birds went about their business. "Don't you just love listening to them?" he would say. I never understood how he could be so excited to hunt them in the fall as they flew south for the winter, and yet even more excited to greet them on their way back north. Even now, when I hear them fly over, I stop, listen and search the skies. It always brings a quiet study and a smile as I remember his whisper in my ear to just, "listen to them."

— Jerry Novotny



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SHEEP MOUNTAIN TO THE HORN

Wayfinding off-trail through Badlands National Park can be challenging but rewarding. Here's a way to escape the traffic along the wall, take in the sights from the top of Sheep Mountain Table, and then descend into the foothills that surround The Castles and The Horn, into some of the least-explored country in the Badlands.

You'll need a high-clearance vehicle, water and some hiking experience. About 35 miles west of Rapid City on Highway 44, turn south at Scenic on Bombing Range Road. Take a right 4.5 miles down, on Sheep Mountain Road. About another 4 miles down you'll see the turn off for Sheep Mountain Table overlook. You can get this far in a sedan and park at the overlook or continue in a high-clearance four-wheel-drive vehicle.

If you're still driving, about a half-mile further down you can park near a line of fence posts along the table's edge. From there,

you can walk east about a half-mile to where you'll find a pass of sorts into the bottoms.

You'll have to shimmy through some tight spaces, under some natural arches, and negotiate some steep spots with loose scree. At the bottom you can follow a winding, intermittent creek south through a canyon filled with psychic geometry. (Be careful not to step on any unexploded ordnance. This area was once part of the U.S. Air Force Badlands Gunnery Range.)

Formations labeled "The Castles" will gird your right as you're funneled toward the southern tip of an isthmus in the park boundaries, which ends at The Horn, a structure which isn't so much a standout as a turnaround point. (This isn't a destination hike, more an exploration).

My route to The Horn and back clocked in at just under 10 glorious, sun-drenched miles.

— Michael Zimny



Unexploded ordnance on the Badlands floor remains as evidence of the area's stint as a bombing range during World War II.

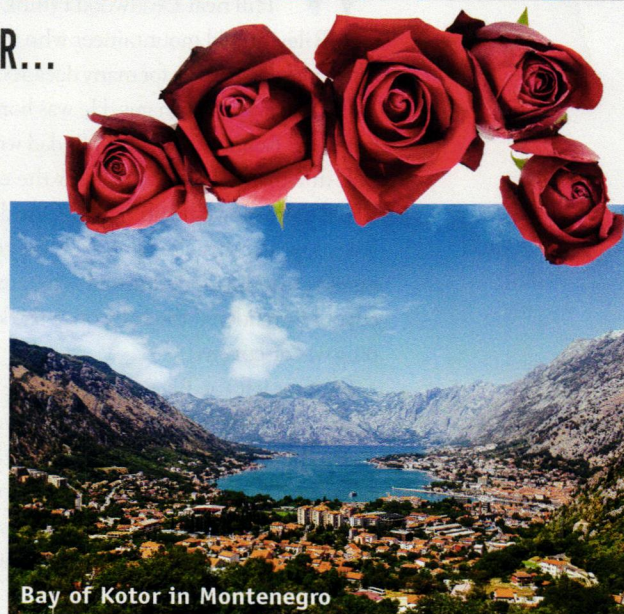
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'WEREN'T WE SUPPOSED TO STOP?'

BY BERNIE HUNHOFF

WHenever I see big logging trucks crawling down Strawberry Hill near Deadwood I think of Emmett Riley, an old mountaineer who traveled that route as a trucker for many decades.

Emmett was a tough guy. He was born on a farm near Rochford in 1921. His dad wrapped him in a blanket and left him at the edge of a field as he plowed with horses. One day, Mr. Riley saw a coyote dragging Emmett and the blanket into the underbrush. Fortunately, the coyote surrendered the baby once the kidnapping was discovered.

Emmett left the Black Hills to serve in the Army during World War II and survived horrors in the South Pacific. After the fighting, he came back to the Black Hills. Both before and after the war, he was in the trucking business with his brother, Toad, and their father, who

never learned to drive.

Emmett told us in 2007 that Toad and their dad were taking a load of gravel to a Deadwood filling station when the truck's brakes failed on the very steep Strawberry Hill. Brake failures were a common mechanical problem in the 1950s.

"Toad couldn't stop that truck any more than he could fly," laughed Emmett. They flew past the filling station, went through Deadwood and started up the hill east of town before the truck finally slowed down. The elder Mr. Riley was oblivious to the problem.

"Dad was smoking his pipe the whole time and he didn't even know the truck was out of control," Emmett said. "When they roared past the gas station he asked, 'Weren't we supposed to stop there?'" 