

Minnekahta eMessenger®

VOLUME III

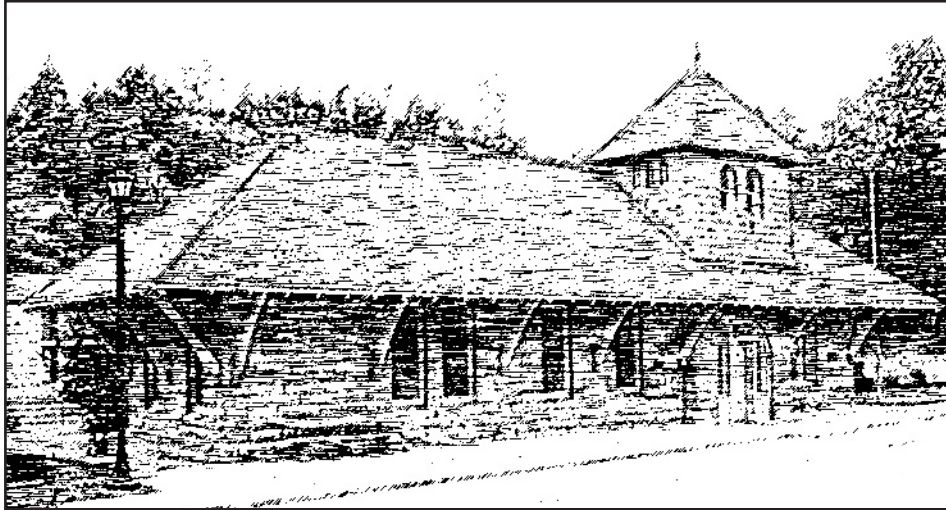
MINNEKAHTA PUBLISHING, LLC

NUMBER 19

SOUTHWESTERN SD.

BRINGING OUR COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

FRIDAY, JAN. 5, 2018



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WE SUPPORT OUR FIRST RESPONDERS THANK YOU ALL LIVES MATTER

HEROES DON'T BUILD A BETTER FUTURE; HARD WORK, SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE DO

By James Giago Davies
Native Sun News Today

People often ask what can be done about all the problems Indians face, the poverty, alcoholism, violence. How can we fix it? You answer that question, best as you can, many times in your life, and as the years check off, you realize how differently you answer it now, compared to when you were young.

My youthful perceptions differed because I was poor. Welfare, food stamps, commodities—that was my world—and racism was an ugly reality you faced most every day. Like so many others I saw Indian issues as correcting active wrongs being perpetrated against me, and the people I loved, by neighbors, teachers, cops, clergy.

Whenever there was talk about the big picture, it was shackled in scope and spirit by the hurt of the moment, and our comprehension of what actually was happening, how the world actually worked, was myopic and simplistic. You see injustice as something being done to you by others, and it is, but you never see it for what it really is—justice is a principle worth fighting for, and dying for, even if no Indian had ever existed.

Because we could not honor the principle of justice, it made us hypocrites in our personal lives. We railed against the Wasicu crimes committed against Lakota, but we committed as bad or worse crimes against each other.

We turned our backs on knowledge, on the history of the human

race outside our breed Lakota ghetto, wrote off their science, art, literature, philosophy as alien and threatening, and separated ourselves from the world at large, aggrieved, sullen, cynical, unkind and uncharitable.

Overwrought and self-absorbed with our own wretchedness, we denied our children the innocence and security of a loved, valued childhood, and pandered shamelessly to our basest instincts.

(see *Future on back cover*)

WHERE DID THEY GO?

By T.L. Matt

If you travel between Edgemont and Hot Springs, you might have noticed that the long, long line of railroad cars that were “parked” on the southeastern side of Highway 18 near Edgemont have disappeared.

I was curious and asked BNSF spokesperson Amy McBeth. Amy said, “This doesn’t mean they will be back in service.”

It seems that this particular rail line is a storage rail line. Clients lease the line for storage of the cars in which they have invested. When their lease is up, the cars have to be moved. They will be replaced by other cars from more clients.

During family trips in Wyoming and Colorado, we noticed similar long lines of empty cars on rails lining the roads we traveled. What does this mean for the health of the railroad companies?

Actually, improvement in the prospects of key units like coal and intermodal (two or more methods of transportation of goods) have benefited railroads since the beginning of 2017.

The coal industry is seeing better days with President Trump as he is aiming to revive the industry by relaxing regulations which were seen by big business

as hurting the prospects. Trump has started to act on his promises made during his campaign.

The rise in natural gas prices is also favorable to demand for coal. Moreover, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, coal production in the United States will improve in 2018. This is despite the challenges posed by the hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria (www.nasdaq.com/article/railroad-industry-outlook-december-2018-cm886615). The West depends on this improvement in the transportation of coal as so many families depend on it as their livelihood.

This railroad line has an interesting history. It began with the chartering in 1848 of the Chicago and Aurora Railroad, a direct ancestor line of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad. Burlington Northern (dates of its operation were from 1970-1996) purchased the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway (later named BNSF Railway), which was owned by the Burlington Northern Sante Fe Corporation.

That corporation was purchased by Berkshire Hathaway in 2009, which is controlled by investor Warren Buffett. It is a railway that has 11 predecessors. Currently, the length of this rail line is estimated to be 27,000 miles (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burlington-Northern-Railroad).

Railroads help the economy of towns in more ways than one. Besides the employment provided, the taxes they pay help fund schools and other municipal institutions. We will only hope that they keep running and increase the future economic stability of our towns and cities here in South Dakota.

I don’t mind those whistles as I drift off to sleep. They are music to my ears!

OLD THREE TOES: A SOUTH DAKOTA LEGEND By T.L. Matt

My familiarity with wolves, other than the fairy-tale variety, was very limited until we moved to Montana. One winter, my husband’s brother Chuck took us on a ride behind his snowmobile high, high up in the Mission Mountains. We saw a solitary black wolf, loping along in the wild, skirting the pines. It was a spiritual experience.

When we relocated to South Dakota, we were able to view wolves “up close and personal.” While living in Lead, we were introduced to two wolves that lived in a large cage behind the neighbor’s house. It was quite a trial for our friends, two sweet little ladies, to put up with all the howling and such next door.

On another occasion, we were very much intimidated, at first, by an enormous half-wolf that belonged to a Lead couple we knew. The wife told us that one day, a small dog-like creature, apparently abandoned, had come to their door. They took the wolf in, where he preceded to grow into an enormous canine—half Arctic Tundra wolf and half Samoyed (or some other white breed).

(see *Legend on back cover*)

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If You Could Change One Thing

Faith or Trust – the Power of Words

By Andy Skadberg

In the past couple years I have learned how we have been sidetracked from our power by the misuse of words. Language is power, and we have been severely conditioned to think and say things without knowing what we might be doing to ourselves. I recently realized that I am even expected to pay attention.

Some may think I am just ranting here, about some nonsense, but I feel it is time to get to the bottom of things.

Language is the first way by which we have lost our power, and confidence, as the *co-creators* of our experience. We need to re-examine the words, and the beliefs behind the words, that we use. George Orwell understood this when he wrote *Animal Farm* and *1984*.

I think the word *trust* is more appropriate than the word *faith* as the latter has been highly abused by religious organizations (as has the word “God.”) I have thought a lot about this but just went to the dictionary to check the definition:

“Faith: belief that is not based on proof.”

“Trust: confident expectation of something.”

For me, this is likely where the confusion has arisen. The “proof” is all around us. Our whole lives, existence, is the “proof.” Faith, it appears, gives no credence to the fact that we are here, and that thoughts, from some source, is from whence all THIS came. And we are *thinking centers*.

Faith, it seems, is a disregard for all the evidence that Source, or God, sustains us, and keeps all the minutest particles in perfect balance. But another key is our consciousness, and that what we think “becomes” too.

This kind of thinking, or lack of thinking, or inability to reason and make deductions and recognize the connectedness of all of life is the cause of our current conundrums. And it is not just me who has come to this conclusion. Albert Schweitzer said the cause of the world’s condition was “Men don’t think.”

It is time that we revisit this lost ability—*thinking*—to begin to wake up to the blatant misuse of the word. We often work totally against ourselves in our own

speech, mainly because of some collective, mass conditioning.

Having faith works very well for the church, for “belief” in the church which cannot provide, in my opinion, the evidence that they have adequately guided people toward their highest spiritual advancement, maintains mass support—even referring to themselves as *sheep*. It is more like what Earl Nightingale identified as slowing society down to accommodate the slowest. I call it mediocrity.

I can see this much more obviously during my time here in Colombia—where the Catholic Church rules. In every tiny village and town, the church is the only thing that exhibits grandeur and wealth—with the backdrop of extreme poverty.

I know that the church has had the *keys* to spiritual upliftment, but these have not been shared with the masses. In my opinion, they haven’t been doing the job that they stepped up to do. And the way that this happens most unabashedly is through the conditioning that has occurred, at the subconscious level, via the “Word” and their beliefs.

I in no way am trying to be argumentative here. I just have not ever written on this topic and felt compelled to write this now. Leadership—*mastery of life*—only occurs when a person recognizes the fantasmical gifts and powers that we have been given to create our lives and our world as a collective humanity.

And this fact about *the word* has been shoved in our faces from the most authoritative sources, but we haven’t really thought about what they were saying: “In the beginning was the word.”

Whether I recognize it or not, somewhere in the process of all of my creations, the WORD has played a critical part in whether or not they came to be.

Trust, for me, means, I know this will happen, even though I may not understand the total mystery. God, or Source, sustains all. If I align and believe a thing to be, it will be because there is plenty of proof in that I am here—thinking and doing something—so there must be support from some incredible source.

Because this experience—LIFE—is a wondrous adventure, an expanding expression of love, whose intent is on ever-expanding life, “a stairway that leads somewhere.”

What I know is it is back to the ONE, but in order for me to get there, I have to live my life to the fullest. It is in that process that I see the “kingdom.”

I must try to share with others who don’t see it themselves because they believe what others have told them.

“Faith or Trust – the Power of Words” is a title of a blogpost by Andy Skadberg. It was published on Mar. 7, 2011 on the author’s website, 13lightmessages.blogspot.com/2011/03/faith-or-trust-power-of-words.html.

Andy Skadberg is a consultant in rural development and innovation in agriculture, with a foundation in environmental protection. He is a proponent of sustainability.

Laws of the Lighthouse

Contributed by John Holmes

The first of the year is known for three things: black-eyed peas, bowl games, and lists. Some don’t eat black-eyed peas. Others hate football. But everybody likes lists.

The Bible certainly has its share of lists. Moses brought one down from the mountain.

There are lists of the gifts of the Spirit. Lists of good fruit and bad. Lists of salutations and greetings. Even the disciples’ boat got into the action as it listed in the stormy Sea of Galilee. (If you smiled at that, then I’ve got a list of puns you’d enjoy.)

But the greatest day of lists is still New Year’s Day. And the number one list is the list I call the Laws of the Lighthouse.

The Laws of the Lighthouse contain more than good ideas, personal preferences, and honest opinions. They are God-given, time-tested truths that define the way you should navigate your life. Observe them and enjoy secure passage. Ignore them and crash against the ragged rocks of reality.

Smart move. The wise captain shifts the direction of his craft according to the signal of the lighthouse. A wise person does the same.

Herewith, then, are the lights I look for and the signals I heed:

(See Lighthouse on page 3)

There's Something To Be Said

The Kindred Spirit By Barbara Hauseman

New Year's Resolutions for 2018

After six decades of striving to live up to my own resolutions, I think this year my New Year's Resolutions will be keepers!

Learning to understand such goals and sticking to them has been difficult in the past, however, these New Year's Resolutions will be the best.

I BELIEVE in myself and pursuing a positive attitude on a daily basis has now given me the strength and attitude to carry on in the second half of my life.

Thinking clearly now, I see all the great possibilities that I didn't see in years past. ATTITUDE has everything to do with my soul and how I care for myself and others. It's taken me some time to realize this valu-

able lesson and thank God I still have the time to live it to the fullest!

We are all here for a purpose in life. I wasn't exactly looking for a miracle or for my wishes to come true, but I knew I was missing something very important in my life. However, I wasn't clear on how to go about finding it. As luck would have it, though, it found me!

When I became silent in my own heart, mind and soul, I found the true meaning of believing in myself!

I have patience for others. However, I sometimes fall short because I am often impatient with myself.

Having good health is another resolution I feel I can provide for myself. I can also help people around me to reach the same goal. Strength is found in others.

Caring for so many in my life has given me the courage to stand up for myself and believe that I CAN turn my life in the direction of being at peace within myself and with others. I have found this "gift" in the friends I have around me and in my faith, knowing that I am not alone. I guess it was always there, I just didn't SEE it until now!

So, my New Year's Resolutions for 2018 are to be happy, give myself a pat on the back once in awhile and know that the second half of my life will be filled with FAITH, HOPE and LOVE.

Believing in myself will give me the power that I never felt I had before. This didn't cost me a dime and will be the best resolution I will keep in my life.

Believing in oneself is truly a gift we should all give to each other.

I'm passing my resolution on to others... BELIEVE!

Lighthouse (cont. from page 2)

- Love God more than you fear hell.
- Once a week, let a child take you on a walk.
- Make major decisions in a cemetery.
- When no one is watching, live as if someone is.
- Succeed at home first.
- Don't spend tomorrow's money today.
- Pray twice as much as you fret.
- Listen twice as much as you speak.
- Only harbor a grudge when God does.
- Never outgrow your love of sunsets.
- Treat people like angels; you will meet some and help make some.
- 'Tis wiser to err on the side of generosity than on the side of scrutiny.
- God has forgiven you; you'd be wise to do the same.
- When you can't trace God's hand, trust his heart.
- Toot your own horn and the notes will be flat.
- Don't feel guilty for God's goodness.
- The book of life is lived in chapters, so know your page number.
- Never let the important be the victim of the trivial.
- Live your liturgy.

To sum it all up:

Approach life like a voyage on a schooner. Enjoy the view. Explore the vessel. Make friends with the captain. Fish a little. And then get off when you get home.

Lies They Tell Writers, Part 15: Establish a Niche

By Rod Miller

Like a low-rent lout, I say it "nitch." Highfalutin folks pronounce it "neesh."

However you say it, if you're a writer you're supposed to find one, crawl inside, and close the lid. That's how successful writers do it, they'll tell you.

Writers who sell lots of books establish a loyal following by giving readers what they expect. When they see your name on the cover of a new book, having read other books by you, they have a pretty good idea of what's inside—it's a shoot-'em-up Western novel, because that's what you write. Or a romance novel. A mystery. Science fiction. A thriller. History. Scholarly biography. Or whatever your "niche" is.

Establishing a niche leads to success for a writer, they say.

And they're probably right.

No lie, this time, to my way of thinking. Because if there's one subject I am well versed in, it's how not to be a successful writer.

There are, no doubt, myriad reasons for that. One of which is my lack of a niche. Everything I write is related to the West, but after that it's all over the place. Novels

that bear little resemblance to one another. Nonfiction on a variety of historic subjects. Poetry of the Western and cowboy type. Short stories in several styles.

Because of all that, my name on the cover of a book doesn't say much about what's inside.

So in the future, from now on, henceforth and forever, I am going to establish a niche and stop writing things that don't fit.

At least that's the lie I keep telling myself.

"Lies They Tell Writers, Part 15: Establish a Niche" is the title of a blogpost by Rod Miller. It was published on May 29, 2015 on the author's website, <http://writerrod-miller.blogspot.com/2015/05/lies-they-tell-writers-part-15.html>.

Writer Rod Miller writes poetry, fiction, and history about the American West and writes online about writing and reading at writerrod-miller.blogspot.com. Information about Rod and his books and other works is available at writerRodMiller.com, his Amazon Author Page (<https://www.amazon.com/Rod-Miller/e/B001HCTX7G>), and at CowboyPoetry.com.

Special Section

Augusto Cesar Sandino, Part 1

By Larry Stocker

When I was in the U.S. Army it was not hard to understand where I fit in because everybody in the army had a rank. I didn't have a rank before I went in the army, nor did I have one after I left the army, but while I was in I always knew where I fit in because I had a rank. It was a surprisingly comfortable feeling.

I received my rank of Private E-1 right after the swearing-in ceremony which, for me, was held in Chicago and it was about as "unceremonial" as a ceremony could ever be. The word "Private" signified my rank and the "E-1" part was my pay grade.

The pay grade is what everyone attached the most importance to. I don't know why. There wasn't much there to worry about. Guys were expected to die in Vietnam for less than minimum wage.

All in all, I was happy with my rank of Private E-1. I thought it was perfectly appropriate. I liked the sound of the word "private." Even though it was the very lowest rank in the army it sounded exclusive, like a private room or a private driveway or a private club. It sounded as if it wasn't really open to everyone (even though in a way it was).

As long as I was in the army this rank, low though it may be, could never be taken from me. You could be "busted" from all those higher ranks like corporal, sergeant, or captain but you could never lose the rank of private.

I liked that security and I never quite understood why so many of the soldiers in my training unit dreamed of holding higher ranks. Okay, money, I can understand that. Everybody in that platoon needed more money. That was no joke but some guys wanted more than the money. They thought they were leaders. These were the guys I really worried about. They would never see the beauty of being a Private!

You also got, free of charge, a service number. Some called it a serial number but that was wrong. I was informed quite seriously that it was actually called a service number. This number was engraved into two metal plates which were attached to a

chain which you were *at all times* supposed to wear around your neck.

The reason you needed two, I was told, was because if you were killed in battle, theoretically, one would be given to the First Sergeant as a reminder that you were dead and the other would remain with the body so the guys that picked up the bodies would remember who this guy used to be.

Another thing about that number was that you were supposed to remember it. I remembered mine quite well. Long after I became disassociated with the army I could still recite that number with ease.

In those days the service number started with two letters. Some were "US" and some were "RA." I was a "US." Almost everybody in my training company were "US's." That meant that they were drafted into service, not there by choice. From what I could see this was a better class of people even if the drill instructors clearly favored the "RA's" when it came to promotions, permanent or temporary.

Whenever you start to feel comfortable, things always change! I've heard that a million times and, yes, I think it's true. Even though I was perfectly happy with my rank the way it was, when we trainees graduated from our two phases of training, we automatically received promotions to Private E-2. It came with some inconsequential raise in pay which we thought was a big deal at the time.

Later, working in my assignment as a company clerk, I eventually reached the lofty rank of Private First Class E-3. Along with this rank I received one gold stripe, which I had to find a way to attach to the sleeves of all my green army shirts—a process that reminded me of my days in Cub Scouts when I got my Wolf Badge and my Mom helped me sew it on my blue Cub Scout shirts.

Like all earthly things, my holding onto the rank of Private was only going to be temporary because, frankly, there was only so much of this U.S. Army life I was going to be able to stand. The Cub Scouts were fine—nobody got killed—but the United States Army was different.

I could have thrived in the army because I always knew where I fit in—it was simple—had it not been for one small issue. I will call it the issue of conscience. Some of the guys definitely would have said the

issue was that I was a coward—"We're having a fight; you don't want to fight; you must be a coward"—but I preferred to think of it as one of conscience.

One spring afternoon in 1968, at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, I raised the issue before my commanding officer, a captain with experience—two tours in Vietnam. "What are we doing in Vietnam?" I asked him.

His answer was indirect—like a ricochet bullet. He said that it would be better for my future to go there, get the experience under my belt, work as a clerk, then come back to the USA and live a good life.

"Don't ask those larger questions," he said. "We are just supposed to do what we are told to do."

"That makes it pretty easy," I said.

"No, not really," said the captain. "It's still hard."

I appreciated his good advice but I was young, idealistic, but mostly just unwilling to give up. Besides, I thought I was right! I thought someday I will be rewarded for being right and not going to Vietnam. Someday, I thought, everyone will see how ridiculous this war is and those who didn't go will be the real heroes.

That day hasn't come yet and it's getting late; I doubt if it will come now. In the meantime, I've learned a lot about how this all works. That's worth something, isn't it?

Even so, in many ways, army life was not that bad. If I just saluted the officers, and if I tried to maintain some kind of decent relationship with the First Sergeant, living as a lowly enlisted man wasn't that bad.

The work wasn't that hard and not really that important, most of the jobs were made-up: policing for cigarette butts, marching around in formations, doing push-ups as penance for some petty infraction, organizing your foot locker, typing a letter over again because it had one little mistake. It's not like the world would fall apart because nobody did those things.

In the army you always knew you would be fed and you always had a place to lay your head. Having that, even on a very basic level, is a comforting feeling that, quite honestly, most of the people in the world don't have.

(Read "Augusto Cesar Sandino, Part 2" by Larry Stocker in the next issue of Minnekahta Messenger on Jan. 19, 2018.)

Rocks in My Head (and Heart)

By T. L. Matt

Why do you often see me with my head inclined earthward, searching the terrain? A dangerous position in which to be at times, says my husband. Well, it's because I honestly do have a curiosity about what is underneath my feet. I absolutely love rocks—unusual ones. Sometimes, when you turn over a rock, you find a small fossil—an added treat!

I come by this fascination naturally, from my mother, who collected a wide variety of heart-shaped rocks. As a matter-of-fact, we distributed her collection to everyone at her funeral, for a reminder of Eloise and her unique love.

People are sometimes aghast at the front of my home, a rock garden of sorts, with many large orange and red rocks. One acquaintance said, "If you run a Geiger counter over these, you would get a good report."

When we moved to Edgemont, I was taken with these rocks and, since they are very heavy, they stay. Since then, I have become more refined in my collecting as I learn of other interesting rocks from the Black Hills.

Years ago, we tried our hand at agate collecting at the Fairburn Agate site. We read that the Fairburn Agate Beds are located about 12 miles northeast of the town of Fairburn in Custer County. Take French Creek road, Highway 18, east off of Highway 79 to the French Creek Campground. The campground and agate beds are located in the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands (www.geocaching.com/geocache/GCT06Z_fairburn-agate-bed-cache?guid=7001ef2f-c627-42da-916d-21235f2a1377).

People from all over the world can be found scouring the landscape for the elusive Fairburn Agate. They are the most coveted of all agates because of their rarity and very colorful banding. They can still be found after erosion, particularly right after a rainstorm.

It was fun negotiating the sometimes challenging hills at the site. We had taken Ashley, our granddaughter, to the site and were very pleased when she finally located a small agate. We weren't so lucky, but did find some interesting rocks and minerals. The joy is in the adventure! We plan to return again to the site.

There are other sites where the agate can be found. This is in a wide band outside the Black Hills to the east and south. East from Rapid City through the Badlands National Monument and along the White River and Cheyenne River breaks into the northwest tip of Nebraska.

The journey of the Fairburn Agate began 300 million years ago in a shallow sea that once covered western South Dakota. Silica was accumulating from meteoric waters eroding from the land and organisms accumulating at the bottom of the sea as they died. Over millions of years, some of the limestone was being replaced by silica and forming into nodules. When the conditions were right, crystals began in the form of fibrous growths. Silica concentrations and trace minerals are how the colorful banding on the Fairburn Agates were formed.

The uplift of the Black Hills, 60 to 70 million years ago, caused 7,500 feet of material to be deposited. These agates tumbled along in streams, being rounded and shaped. They were eventually buried in the Chadron formation layer for another 30 million years. Then volcanic ash accumulation buried them once more. As erosion began to carve out the Badlands, the Fairburns began to surface once again. They are there, in hiding, just waiting for you to discover them!

In the Railroad Butte Area, there is a lot of erosion taking place. This is in the "Badlands" area. To reach this site from Rapid City, get on Highway 44 east for about 15 miles. You will pass through Farmingdale, a small community. You'll see many buttes off to your right. At the New Underwood road intersection, turn south onto gravel.

Continue south across Rapid Creek and up to the top on the other side. The Buttes are off to the east, visible from the road. Just before the dirt bike area is a trail that goes to the west. If it's dry, you can drive a vehicle on the trail for four miles.

This is in National Grassland, so you are allowed to hunt anywhere from the road you came in on to the west for about 8 miles, and to the east for about 10 miles. As a precaution—don't drive off the trail as the gullies are always wet and the cactus can play havoc with your tires (www.angelfire.com/nb/rockman/Page19.html).

Up the main gravel road, south and about three to four miles, you will find a double gate on the east at the top of a hill. You can enter the gates to the east and drive about two miles before the going gets rough. At

the base of these hills is a carpet of agates, jaspers, woods and fossils. East another ten miles yields rocks in abundance. Be sure to take enough drinking water along and watch out for the gumbo. You will come across some old vehicle victims of long ago still stuck in the gullies.

Near Wall, SD is a prime Bubblegum Agate area. All colors and sizes with terrific patterns are there. Sometimes you find solid agates, jaspers and flint, and occasionally a Fairburn. Watch out for farm animals in the area and especially watch out for rattlesnakes! This area is National Grassland, so rock hunting is allowed.

TeePee Canyon agates are characterized by intense patterns of purples, reds and oranges encased in a chocolate brown limestone host rock. They are located in TeePee Canyon, which is on the eastern edge of the Black Hills near the South Dakota-Wyoming border.

To get to the TeePee Canyon site, drive west on Highway 16 to Forest Service Road 282, about three miles west of the Jewel Cave Monument. Turn north on 282 and drive about a mile or two. Dig sites are located on the slopes of the hills in the National Forest.

Unlike Fairburns and other grassland agates buried in soft turf, these agates are located several feet down within the brownish limestone and have to be chiseled, chipped or dug out. Because of the sheer beauty of the stone, the extra effort is worth it (jedidiahfree.blogspot.com/2013/09/badlands-buttess-and-banded-agate.html#.Wk3cXPCnHmE).

The USFS in Custer allows the use of hand tools only, and you have to stay in the area of previous mining. If you are interested, you can learn how to chisel those unique agates out of the limestone at csmgeologypost.blogspot.com/2012/08/cracking-rocks-at-teepee-canyon.html.

Life is such a marvelous adventure, and if we can find treasures along the way, how much richer we can become. I'm not talking about monetary riches—for me, locating a fascinating rock is as much a spiritual find as it is a physical discovery.

I'm awed at the beauty of Earth and the magnitude of creation. Besides, the more "pet" rocks you have, the more you want. I believe you can never have enough! Alas, my husband does not share this philosophy. We may have to buy another shed—or hey!—maybe another house!

Rhyme Or Reason

The Flower

By Andy Skadberg

a flower beamed its splendor to me,
sharing its grandeur with glee,
a simple expression,
that left its impression, sending its
message through my eyes,
color, texture, aroma it supplies,
the message carried on a path,
no alternative intentions, no wrath.
only expressing its nature,
no concerns for stature,
no expectations for recompense,
just an offering for my sense,
a gift delivered for free,
one that I accepted deep within me.



Life on the Rio Grande

By Larry Stocker

The water is still flowing strong in the Rio Grande and we are into August. It just feels good to know that that power exists only four miles from my house. And you can't say we New Mexican observers take it for granted. We know what it's like when there is only sand between those wide banks.

I am not an official of any kind, much less an expert on the goings-on up north in the watershed, but I have heard ordinary people say that it was a good snowfall in Colorado in the winter past. I just say "Okay" and "Thank you, Colorado." Maybe those downstream people in Mexico and in Texas are saying "Thank you, New Mexico."

I suppose some of this water makes it all the way to the Gulf of Mexico while some evaporates, goes into the air and eventually comes down in places, I hope, that really need it. I think there are a lot of them. This problem of equalization of resources has been a persistent one, manifesting itself in so many ways.

Last night the sky was grey and blue. There were big clouds. They looked like they were made of solid material that would not give way when bumped. The sun, with its colors of yellow and red, only peeked through one little tunnel. Those

thick clouds prevented a true sunset, but they were a show all by themselves.

After the sun was down, the clouds lost their attitude and listened to my music-playing-bench companion and I as we sang the song, "Floating In The Air." I think the song reminded the clouds how much nicer a gentle sky could be, but I'm pretty sure the sun received no benefit from the song at all. Those blue-grey guys soaked up the sounds before they could stretch all the way to the sun.

I am not an official of any kind, much less an expert on sound transmission, but I do know that for guitar music to travel out to the sun you have to have a clear shot.

Seems like fishing from the banks at La Llorona Park is increasing in popularity. Last night my companion, who has eagle eyes and rarely misses a thing, spotted the first positive result of that activity that I know of this year. It was a small catfish that may have been thrown back by some but was hauled off by this particular pescador—to be introduced to the frying pan, I imagine.

The fishing, the life of the fish, the fisherman's supper, and so many other things would not be possible without that water in the river. I just say "Thank you, Colorado, thanks for your snow last winter! Thanks for keeping the Rio Grande wet!"

"Life on the Rio Grande" is a weekly email blog written by Larry Stocker. This story was published on Aug. 1, 2014.

Ranching Ain't What It Used to Be

Contributed by Dennis Kasperek

A successful rancher died and left everything to his devoted wife. She was determined to keep the ranch, but knew very little about ranching, so she decided to place an ad in the newspaper for a ranch hand.

Two cowboys applied for the job. One was gay and the other a drunk. She thought long and hard about it, and when no one else applied she decided to hire the gay guy, figuring it would be safer to have him around the house than the drunk.

He proved to be a hard worker who put in long hours every day and knew a lot about ranching. For weeks, the two of them worked, and the ranch was doing very well.

One day, the rancher's widow said to the hired hand, "You have done a really good job, and the ranch is looking great. You should go into town and kick up your heels."

The hired hand readily agreed and went into town on Saturday night.

One o'clock came, however, and he didn't return.

Two o'clock came and still no hired hand.

Finally he returned around two-thirty and, upon entering the room, he found the rancher's widow sitting by the fireplace with a glass of wine, waiting for him. She quietly called him over to her.

"Unbutton my blouse and take it off," she said. Trembling, he did as she directed.

"Now take off my boots." He did as she asked, ever so slowly.

"Now take off my hose." He removed them gently and placed them neatly by her boots.

"Now take off my skirt." He slowly unbuttoned it, constantly watching her eyes in the fire light.

"Now take off my bra." Again, with trembling hands, he did as he was told and dropped it to the floor.

Then she looked at him and said, "If you ever wear my clothes into town again, you're fired."

I didn't see it coming, either!

Well, If You Ask Us

Last of the Cuter Boys

By Grits McMorrow

Last month our family lost a member. Old and tired, mostly blind and deaf, and a bit incontinent, Toshi (pronounced with a long “o” sound) McMorrow entered the Light to join his half-brother Pardy Boy (together they were the “Cuter Boys”), his half-sisters Rosie Kitty and Callie Rose, and his Uncle Kevvy in Heaven.

Toshi was a good boy who loved to be with his family. He never had to be searched for in our neighborhood because he didn’t seem interested in “striking out on his own to see the world” beyond the lines of our property. You see, the outside world had little to offer “Yoshi Toshi” that he couldn’t obtain in abundance at home.

“Lil’ Tosh” had a wide grassy back yard to sniff around, a forest of locust trees to mark, and a swimming pool in which to cool off on hot days. He never had to leave home in search of food because his food dish always contained wholesome, home-cooked meals.

As small as he was, “Growly” was fearless. The tone of his bark had a deep barrel sound that made you think of a bigger dog. And strangers beware; no visitor was too large to intimidate him. Toshi was a worthy guard dog, defending his family from threats.

Thank you for blessing our lives, Toshi. Daddy and Mommy cherish our memories of the loving and happy times we shared together. You may have been regarded as “Toshi Terror” by some, but for us you will always be our sweet little “Baby To.”



Chicken Little and 2018

By T.L. Matt

“The sky is falling! The sky is falling!” proclaimed Chicken Little to her barnyard friends. Are we sometimes like this small fowl, spreading tales of doom and gloom to our neighbors and associates? Every day there are tales of impending disasters from countless sources in the media, yet we awake every morning to find the sun still shining through our window and the earth still revolving as usual.

Not to say that we shouldn’t have some preparations made in regards to a natural disaster, but our overall demeanor should be one of positive vibes, not negative.

Starting off the new year is a good time to evaluate what we project. Do we bless people with sincere compliments or bombard them with criticism? A smile and acknowledgment of others, even strangers, can go a long way toward making others feel a valued part of the human race.

Service to people in need can make us feel the warmth of love and, as we keep a glow about us, we generate this to others. Evil constricts and diminishes. Love spreads itself unbounded.

Strong hurricanes and extraordinary forest fires did their damage and many people felt the after effects. It was a year of surprises, not all good, but valiant people came to the aid of those needing assistance. We have a history as a people of coming together regardless of race or religion and lending a hand to lift a neighbor.

As we contemplate our resolutions for 2018, let’s keep in mind that everyday stress can be relieved by socialization. Exercise and eating right can help, but sharing with others is a good way to keep ourselves focused on the positive and improve our health—mental and spiritual as well as physical. We owe this not only to ourselves, but to our family.

Our country has survived bad presidents, wars, depression and natural disasters and will continue to do so. The resilient American spirit is alive and well! Let’s put a positive slant on 2018 and go forward with a smile!

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Future (cont. from front cover)

Whenever we gathered in ceremony, we took on the airs and trappings and dignity of honored ancestors, which we had not earned, and did not truly comprehend or respect.

We left no sacred teaching untwisted, no time honored custom dishonored, and there was little genuine spiritual substance to much of it, very few were actually made over ikce wicasa, which was why the same man honored as a community leader one day, could binge drink his way into detox and rehab, the next.

And we were impervious to shame, incapable of stepping back and honestly assessing our own abject human failure, because to ever meet the eyes of the man in the mirror was to surrender everything to the rankest despair and hopelessness imaginable.

Whenever someone would step up and try to apply sensible, honest-hearted thinking to all our problems, all his words succeeded in doing was reminding us of what our inner spirit knew all too well, we were lost souls, playing out the string, and we shut such people out or shouted them down.

Most of our leaders, political and spiritual, were flawed products of all I have described, but additionally corrupted by power and greed and ego, and so they were ultra-vulgar representations of the worst part of us, not the best.

Our writers and thinkers tended to be respected only to the extent they ignored talking about the reality of the world I have described, but when they crafted elegant tapestries of specious spiritual wisdom and told the people what they wanted to hear about how wonderful they were, and how terrible everything else was, the Wasicu world took note and mistook their drivel for how real Indians talk.

The net result is zero headway has been made on Indian issues. Crime, poverty, violence, incest, suicide remain at record highs. All the activism of the past century has been a wash.

Certain people, as flawed as many of us, have nonetheless worked past those abiding flaws, struggled to establish a foundation to build a future for the Lakota people, one of independence and self-reliance, honoring who we were, who we are, but unafraid to change and become who we could be, but they still get less recognition than others, less recognition than people who have far less of the things needed to preserve our culture and safeguard our future.

Wiki up notable Lakota and you will find no Tim Giago, even though few Lakota have been more notable these past forty years. I could have added his name, but I did not, because I see in his omission graphic evidence that those who refuse to adapt and change and grow and improve are still seen as heroes defending a false memory and message of who we were, who we are, and where we are headed.

I have been at loggerheads many times in my life with Tim Giago, I don't pretend to be his confidant, and were he not my uncle, maybe I would not even be his friend, I have never even been to his home, have no idea where he lives, but when I think of a person to ask what can be done to help the Lakota people, I cannot think of a person with more experience, and knowledge and comprehension of the world to ask, who came from the same world of poverty and hopelessness we did.

I remember him as a young man, pulling up to my brother's place, in a vehicle packed with all his belongings, stubble bearded and pretty much flat broke, and from that day he built a donut shop business, landed a TV show, started a newspaper, a journalist foundation, a magazine, and created a standard of Indian journalism that equals and exceeds the mainstream standard in this state.

So I leave it to some impartial third party to add his name to Wiki's list of notable Lakota. It should have never been left off.

"Heroes Don't Build a Better Future; Hard Work, Skill and Knowledge Do" is a title of a journal post by James Giago Davies. It was published on May 22, 2015 on the author's Facebook home page, www.facebook.com/iyeska-journal/.

James Giago Davies, an enrolled member of the Oglala Lakota tribe, is an award winning journalist and longtime correspondent and columnist of the Native Sun News Today weekly newspaper based in Rapid City (www.nativesunnews.today/).

Legend (cont. from front cover)

During our visit, he lounged on a large couch, taking up the entire piece of furniture. We didn't need to feel intimidated by him because he was extremely gentle and unassuming. He turned out to be an excellent guard dog, too, by just showing up at the front door—he didn't even have to growl!

The legendary Three Toes (Three Toes was so named because he lost a paw in a trap early in life; he was easy to track because of that incident) is described in *The Last Wolf* by Gary Enright. An authority on wolves who has done extensive research on his subject, Enright says Three Toes' "most serious crimes of 'doing what wolves do' came about only after hunters and trappers killed off his entire family. It was at that point he turned renegade" (www.sdpb.org/blogs/images-of-the-past/the-custer-wolf/).

In an article in South Dakota Magazine, Katie Hunhoff reveals that gray wolves are bigger and stronger than timber wolves—and were hunted to extinction in South Dakota (www.southdakotamagazine.com/three-toes).

In "one of the funniest and most introspective works on early 20th century West River life, the 1929 book, *Sheep: Life on the South Dakota Range*, sheepherder and author Archie Gilfillan wrote, "For 13 years [Three Toes] laughed at poison, traps and guns, lived in and off enemy country with the hand of every man against him, a cunning, bloodthirsty killer, a super wolf

among wolves and the most destructive single animal of which there is any record anywhere. (South Dakota Magazine)."

Three Toes' reputation as a bloodthirsty killer was first recorded in 1912. It is estimated that, in his lifetime, his kills exceeded \$50,000 in livestock losses (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Toes_of_Harding_County).

Gilfillan wrote, "Other wolves might kill one cow or sheep and eat off that and be satisfied. But Three Toes killed for the sheer love of killing. On one occasion, he visited three different ranches in one night, killed many sheep and lambs at each one, but ate only the liver of one lamb."

Three Toes was known to have killed 66 sheep in two nights shortly before his capture. He was pursued by over 150 men, only to be trapped on July 23, 1925 near Gallup, South Dakota by Clyde F. Briggs, the state deputy predatory animal inspector (Wikipedia).

Hunhoff says that Three Toes was tricked by a hidden trap. The earth around him was scratched and plowed by his frantic efforts to escape. Briggs muzzled and hog-tied the big wolf and put him in the backseat of his car, intending to deliver him to Rapid City alive.

But the big wolf won out at the last, as he died with his open eyes fixed on Briggs. Gilfillan wrote, "Call it a broken heart, or what you will—something of this sort is what killed the old wolf. He was resting easily when found, his wounds were superficial... but there was something in his grand old spirit that could not brook capture, and Nature... granted him his release."

Three Toes was thought to have been 20 years old, measured 6 feet in length and weighed about 80 pounds.

Enright said, "Even to this day, wolf packs running free in areas of the country where wildlife and livestock are still their targets, wolf hunters insist on doing their best to eliminate the species. Not everyone agrees with this philosophy."

What do you think?