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WHAT IS AN IYESKA? NOT EVEN MOST IYESKA KNOW

By James Giago Davies
Native Sun News Today

“Wasicu” is what the Lakota call White folks. “Iyeska” is what Lakota call breeds. Originally Iyeska was a name given to breed Lakota interpreters, a valuable skill when making trade with French *coureur de bois*. That skill is no longer necessary.

In practice, modern Iyeska are often treated as the bastard shards left on the ground when the Lakota and Wasicu cultures collided, routinely regarded as whatever suits the expedient agenda of more dominant and influential groups.

There is no Bureau of Iyeska Affairs, no Iyeska Health Service, and no Iyeska Sioux Tribe, even though Iyeska are by far the most representative segment of the Lakota population.

Whether Iyeska decide to be Wasicu or Lakota, that identity is seldom accepted or respected. Inevitably this leads to an internal sense of shame they are not enough of either.

Because I have always been an avid reader, and developed a broad knowledge of the larger world, and a keen interest in science and geography and history and philosophy, most Lakota have had little use for me. Conversely, Wasicu admire those qualities in a person, but that admiration is often trumped by an abiding contempt for scruffy breeds.

Most Wasicu and Lakota are locked into restrictive identities, incapable of comfortably interacting freely in a world not critically predicated on their particular brand of myopic provincialism.

Such folks must associate with like, and like is by definition restrictive, and so their minds never open to the otherness of others, and when confronted with an uncensored reflection of who

they actually are, they refuse to process that reflection, refuse to acknowledge that reflection as themselves.

When the internet came along, literate Iyeska had an opportunity to “meet” people from across the planet by posting on message boards. During that time I posted with a First American from Canada. Don’t know his real name, but his message board handle was “Pow-wow.”

He had been adopted as a baby by a White family, and at first we were enthusiastic to post to each other, but it soon became clear his adoption had severely altered him.

He had internalized the values of right-wing authoritarian parents, and zealously defended their uncharitable perspectives even when these ran diametric to what he would have held had he been raised by his own people. (see *Iyeska on back cover*)

LEARNING FROM LAURA; WARMTH IN WINTER

By T.L. Matt

This past week when I heard the whistling wind pound the back bedroom, I stuffed a pillow over my head. The wind was so strong I couldn’t get rid of the annoying sound.

It took me back to that book, *The Long Winter* by Laura Ingalls Wilder. The story, based on fact, tells of the winter of 1880 around De Smet, South Dakota.

The storms were fierce and never seemed to let up. Because the drifts were so high, the trains couldn’t get through with supplies for the families there. The lucky ones had put away some food storage, but the weeks ran into months and the people were getting quite desperate.

Two young men, Almonzo Wilder (Laura’s future husband) and Cap Garland, braved the terrible weather to reach a remote homestead where there was a store of wheat. They saved the day when they carted back the grain to the grateful residents of De Smet and surrounding areas.

Laura wrote that, even with the wheat, sustaining life that winter

was hard. Her family used a small coffee grinder constantly to grind food to feed themselves. Straw was twisted for fuel for the fire and hands became chapped and bled. Daily life became monotonous and the roaring of the winter wind maddening.

“Laura felt a warmth inside her. It was very small, but it was strong. It was steady, like a tiny light in the dark, and it burned very low but no winds would make it flicker, because it would not give up.” —*The Long Winter*, ©1940.

Because Laura was receptive to the Spirit, she was able to endure and survive. Pa even had troubles; his hands were so stiff from the cold, hard, physical labor, that he couldn’t play the fiddle—the fiddle was a mainstay of family solidarity. (see *Laura on back cover*)

DANCE YOUR CARES AWAY—THE NOSTALGIA MACHINE

By T.L. Matt

“Okay Terry,” instructed my sister Suzy, “You need to spend this money on yourself, not other people.” When I got Suzy’s check in the mail, I was tempted to add it to the stash I had reserved for buying presents, but adhered to my sister’s advice. I bought the thing I had coveted throughout the years—a turntable in a unit that could play 45’s and 78’s, plus the usual CD and tape formats, and a radio.

Oh, what memories came rushing back as I sifted through my old rusty record case full of 45 records. I noticed “Rock Around the Clock” by Bill Haley and the Comets was missing, as well as several other very popular hits of the past. They might have been worth something today—oh well!

When I started the 7th grade and put away my dolls, that was about the time that Tinkie Pruess from St. Louis moved into the neighborhood. Her accent somehow made her seem exotic to us with our southwestern Missouri backgrounds.

Tinkie was a year older, very “cool” and I and the neighborhood girls admired her every move. She taught us to dance for the first time, and we were on our way to what we thought would be fame and fortune and true romance!

We decorated our various basements and tried to coerce the reluctant boys in the neighborhood with promises of lots of snacks and soda pop to attend our dances. Sometimes we had to just dance with ourselves.

Joining a square dance group was fun—but I longed to be in the “pop scene” and dance on TV. Our local station sponsored a Dick Clark American Bandstand spin-off every Saturday. Somehow, it actually happened and it was “Hairspray” (a 2007 musical romantic comedy film).

My tall, gangly partner could fling me around in every imaginable way, as I only weighed 78 pounds! He never dropped me, which was a miracle.

Just like Nikki Blonsky (as Tracy Turnblad) had done in “Hairspray,” I modeled during (see *Dance on back cover*)

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If You Could Change One Thing

Putting a Price on My Soul

By Andy Skadberg

Life seems to be about settling, or satisfying, this yearning. Ultimately I believe it's for a true experience of what we believe, or think, is God. But why this yearning for something that is truly everywhere?

This has been the answer, the conclusion, the solution to all my questions, seeking, yearning—to those deep, slow-burning questions that I have inside. There are many, or have been. It all came down to the statement, when I took the risk to step out of the game—"I want more!!" I yearn to know the "God thing." "How do I fit?" "How does it work?" "Why?"

But if it is already here, in everything, why do I have to go somewhere, or seek, or do? I guess it is the nature of the experience here—in what we call "life." I also seek happiness, peace, appreciation—Is this the same desire for God? After all of the acquisition of things, experience, knowledge it has always been followed by a "neediness" for more.

That experience has become "wanting"—there is a bitter taste it has left behind. Something in my heart tells me that "doing" any more will leave me dissatisfied—"doing" in the sense of expecting some external reward—money, prestige, recognition.

Of course I like to be noticed—I think we all do. But after stacking up a bunch of paper, or numbers, or words, I found there wasn't much satisfaction. The satisfaction, now, comes from just the act of Sharing. It's kind of like "Being" for me.

I've done a lot of stuff, gotten some answers, or more questions, but it's fun to just Share. But how can I put a price on that? It does seem to be the most important game in the world.

I used to play Monopoly. But it did get boring. I found the reward of winning to not be worth the anxiety of "wanting" to win.

What is a fragrant flower blooming in a dew-covered meadow worth? Or the laughter of children? To become like a child...

does it offer the chance to enter the Kingdom?

I've really lost interest in putting a price on what I do. The numbers game has really come to bore me. Does a tree trust that the Earth will still be here to hold its roots? Do I question each day whether the "science" of the electrons of my body will still operate in balance, or even the galaxies? Why is there this lack of trust in what we call human affairs?

I depend on nature for my lessons. When I go outside, the elements and living things seem pretty peaceful—always moving, yet peaceful. Even the stars or the elements in my body seem in balance—at least it feels that way.

I have learned that everything is living and dying—but that is just the natural process of things. The interesting thing is the consistency of the consciousness of the feeling of being me. I've been told I go to lots of other places but I don't really remember, clearly.

I can tell my appreciation for what is, has been, expanding. Sometimes the joy, the ecstasy, that seems to emanate from my heart is increasing. I have learned a lot in this lifetime—and now I know I really know nothing. But my yearning to be one with God has expanded, too.

And yet, now I know that I can't ever be out of God—so, I guess, I am really yearning to Be, here, Now—because, I guess I am—at least this part I am aware of. I'm pretty sure God really is taking care of everything. At least the last time I checked he/she/it was.

I'm thinking I'm just going to Share my stuff—I don't know what else to do. I'll let someone else put a value to it. It just feels good to Share. Others can take it or leave it.

I like my stuff. Sometimes it really surprises me. Not many other people seem to notice. Ah, what the hell. I'm not very good at marketing and advertising—well, actually, I just don't want to play that game either—I can be pretty good. I don't play Monopoly, chess or video games either.

I guess I'm just becoming a boring old guy. I like to think about God, life and how to feel peaceful and really happy. How do I avoid feeling angst, or frustration, or anger? What can I do to help others to feel

happy? I like this stuff now. I don't really know how to put a price on those things. I don't really want to "raise money" to do them either.

This game just has really gotten boring to me. And it seems to cause a lot of angst. I guess I'm screwed because many people tell me that I have to play the game just to live. Hmmm..., this is quite the conundrum... What am I gonna do?

"Putting a Price on My Soul" is a title of a blogpost by Andy Skadberg. It was published on Mar. 10, 2012 on the author's website, 13lightmessages.blogspot.com/2012/03/putting-price-on-my-soul.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.

Keeper of the Light

By T.L. Matt

The icy chill of Winter's hand
permeates the mellow earth,
While men, inside, like the
wind, grow cold –
Inflicting others with their
pain

My love is a cheery fireplace,
embracing all around
with a splendid glow of light
And the very embers
of the deepest hue
are saved for me

You are my haven, my place
of rest from the burdens of
the world—
Your touch is a blanket
Of sincerity
Forever, and eternal,
and true

In that Miraculous Birth
of one small Child so long ago,
We see our birth, my love,
(Our spirit's flight)
And pray that one day
We shall kneel, hand in hand
Before the Keeper of that
Light

There's Something To Be Said

Randy Graham, Hot Springs Entrepreneur

By T.L Matt and D.E. Matt

Randy Graham, our congenial host, invited us in to sit on his comfy couch and treated us to a pleasant and informative interview at his Happy Hollow residence.

He first moved to Hot Springs in 1999, but left to attend college in Washington where he majored in computer networking and web design. Later, Randy lived in Florida, Oklahoma, and Missouri before returning to South Dakota, living in Aberdeen for awhile before coming back to Hot Springs.

Randy says he was drawn to this area because he likes the weather and people and enjoys his many Hot Springs friends.

After the Vietnam War, Randy entered the service to become a combat engineer in Louisiana. Lately, he is a police department volunteer at the VA. Among his varied interests, Randy has a black belt in karate.

One of his current endeavors is the expert remodeling and redecorating of homes, after which he resells or rents them.

Randy is a web multimedia developer and provides people with complete online e-commerce shops through his company, GRAND180 Creative Services (www.grand180.com). Its services include website design, registration and hosting. The charge is reasonable. People from all over the world have purchased products from the websites Randy has created. One local small business recently received a \$1,000 order from the Orient!

While Randy was a Pepsi merchandiser in Hot Springs, he visited many businesses and noticed pictures of the sales offered at each. He thought, "Wouldn't it be great to put these ads online and promote the sales that way?" From this brainstorm, HotSpringsReport.com was born! It's been online since July 2016.

The website isn't just an advertising medium. It also presents local news and

events; an opinion forum; a swap shop; and a place to post photos and other information. For example, on the "What's Up>People" page, Robert A. Ikonen is pictured, along with his poem, "The Balance."

HotSpringsReport.com is a great place to post upcoming activities. The site's motto is: "If It Matters to You, It Matters to Us."

The website features a Twitter feed that attracts young people as well as the older generation. There are videos and links to numerous topics. It has online mobile advertising, search engine optimization and is responsive to display in a variety of devices. This is a fast way to reach people on the move today.

Monthly advertising costs are low: \$3.00 for a sidebar ad and \$5.00 for front page slider image ads with a web page.

Randy hopes to host more quality content, with lots of people contributing. He would like to see opinions concerning important events in the area. If it's appropriate, he will post it online at no charge.

We discussed the fact that, because of lack of business opportunities, people leave Hot Springs. Randy agreed, saying, "I would like to see things happening in Hot Springs. If you change the business dynamics, more children might stay in the area."

To contact Randy, call (605) 745-4772 to post ads, create a sales website, or submit comments or upcoming activities.

Issues of *Minnekahta Messenger* now appear on HotSpringsReport.com. We look forward to a long and beneficial partnership with Randy Graham and his enterprise!

Lies They Tell Writers, Part 16: Just Say It

By Rod Miller

Some time ago, I said in one of these screeds that in good writing "what" you say is important, but "how" you say it is every bit as—if not more—important.

That prompted a comment from a friend, fellow writer, and former teacher that, to his way of thinking, the two are inseparable. I guess we are of different minds. Here's an explanation. In some of the workshops I teach I use this example to demonstrate:

"In 1776, our founding fathers, desiring freedom and equality for all, created the American nation."

That sentence is a fairly good, if simplistic, explanation of the birth of our country. It says what it needs to say and does so in a straightforward manner without a lot of foofaraw.

But, the same thought, the same idea, the same "what," in the hands of a better writer comes out this way:

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

That writer was, of course, Abraham Lincoln, opening the lid on his immortal Gettysburg Address. And while my line captured the "what" of it equally well, it will never be immortal.

All because Mr. Lincoln didn't just say it—he paid more attention to the "how" of saying it.

"Lies They Tell Writers, Part 16: Just Say It" is the title of a blogpost by Rod Miller. It was published on Jul. 4, 2015 on the author's website, <http://writerrodmillers.blogspot.com/2015/07/lies-they-tell-writers-part-16-just-say.html>.

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

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Off The Beaten Path

My Mountain Climbing Trip in Alaska, Summer of 1955, Part 1

By John Holmes

I had spent the last two years on two different ranches in Colorado and [during] the summer of 1955 I spent working at a large quarry near Montour, Iowa.

My brother Bill was a member of the Iowa Mountaineers and had gone on trips to mountains in the west for the last two years. He got me interested in the trip they were organizing to go mountain climbing in Alaska.

I was short of money and we needed a certain amount of gear so I made it myself, including making my own ice axe. I had my own welder so I built it out of stuff we had on my dad's farm.

On August 12, 1955 my brother and I loaded up my 1934 Chevrolet car with our gear and due to a weak battery we had to push it to get it started and we drove the 80 miles to the University of Iowa at Iowa City. All thirty five of us were assembled to get everything packed in the big panel truck, an old school bus and a brand new Volkswagen car that one of the members owned.

Here's how I recorded it in my trip journal:

August 12, 6:15 PM. I am sitting next to the vehicles waiting to start. Everyone is hurrying to and fro getting their various errands carried out. Cameras are clicking from all directions. We got our pictures taken as a group and our names read off telling us which vehicle we will ride in. Now we are ready to start.

6:45 PM. As we are pulling out of Iowa City, one of our Austrian Guides is playing a harmonica and the other two [guides] are singing.

7:00 PM. We have just finished introductions. We drove until we got to a rest stop in Central City and it is 8:25 PM.

August 13, 5:45 AM. We are just leaving Brainerd, Minnesota. It looks like it will be a perfect day. There is not a cloud in the sky and the sun is coming up in the east, fiery red. Last night a very amusing thing happened. After assembling in the bus after our first stop of the trip, Hans Schalypche, one of the Austrian guides, asked for a flame (flashlight). He shone it on his friend's chest and there, stuck inside

of his shirt, was a [Ladies Restroom] sign that he had taken from the station.

10:00 AM. We are stopped at Parham, Minnesota for a rest stop. I was able to catch up on some sleep this morning that I lost out on during the night. It is a real nice day here and the temperature is 70 degrees.

2:15 PM. We are stopped in North Dakota along a field. There are three self-propelled combines working out in the field and a very strong breeze is blowing from the North East. It is also very hot and dry. Quite a few members of the Club are out taking pictures. During the last three hours I have developed a very painful toothache. It is making my trip un-enjoyable.

5:35 PM. One of the members, Wendell Caldwell, fixed up my tooth so it hardly hurts now. He is a medical student and has quite a supply of medical supplies along with him.

We are now stopped at Devils Lake, North Dakota. Just as we arrived here we ran out of gas and luckily coasted in to the gas station. So far we have gone 1300 miles.

There is a very hard wind blowing here. A flock of seagulls are flying around which is an unusual sight for us Iowans.

I have been riding in the panel truck since noon and have had about a square foot of space to park on and boy did I get numb.

August 14, 7:20 AM. It is very cloudy and cold. Last night it rained very hard at times and the wind would whip it right into the rear of the truck. I was lying right near the opening and I got soaked in spots. I slept real well though.

This morning we traveled over some real rough roads. We hit one bump that was so big that the two fellows sleeping next to the rear of the truck bounced about two feet in the air and they were so sleepy they didn't even wake up.

Right now we are getting gas. We are in Williston, SD. We have just rearranged the duffel bags so when we put the mattresses over them it will be smoother. The school bus has all the seats taken out so we have just an open area.

We have just entered an Indian reservation in Montana. The houses have thatched roofs. A car just pulled up behind us from Iowa. We asked them where they were from and they said "Rainbow Drive" which is between Waterloo and Cedar Falls. That is just about 35 miles North of where I grew up.

It has turned out to be a very nice day and the country is beautiful. It is typical ranch country with large hills abundantly covered with grass and hardly any trees except for cottonwoods along the creek bottoms.

We just passed a tent village nestled against a hill in the distance. A short distance away is an Indian Village. The people here are very dark and weather beaten looking.

The wheat harvest is in full swing here. All along the way we have been seeing combines busily at work gathering up the wheat. Most of the fields have been wind-rowed. As I look out of the rear of the truck I can see vast acres of wheat and coming along behind us are combines on trucks.

We just passed a herd of horses that are walking along the highway toward the east. As I look off into the distance I can see thousands of sheep grazing along the hillside. Scattered among them I can see some sheep herders and an occasional sheep wagon.

To the south of us is a large forest consisting of pine trees. It looks out of place next to the treeless hills. We just crossed a large river which is called the Milk River.

10:05 AM. We are just leaving Wolf Point, Montana. We stopped there for a rest stop. I just had my tooth operated on. It feels fine now.

One hour after we stopped for dinner there were six antelope grazing next to a large lake. Almost our entire group started creeping through the grass to try and get close to them. It was so comical that I got on top of the bus and took a picture of the people instead of the antelope.

(see Alaska on page 5)

Alaska (cont. from page 4)

10:00 PM. We have just cleared Customs and while we were in the process, three fellows tried to slip through with cigarettes and whiskey but the agents caught them and called in the authorities. While the authorities were coming they picked up more fellows trying to slip through. They were all drunk so they stuck them in the back of their car and took them to jail.

We are now eating supper next to a tavern which is quite noisy. Many people in the tavern are drunk. I need to explain that our group prepares all our meals wherever we are at meal time. We are divided into three cooking groups and every third day it is our time to prepare the meals.

August 15, 5:30 AM. We are traveling in Alberta now. The sunrise is beautiful. It came up bright red over a vast prairie studied with lush wheat and oat fields. We just passed the largest expanse of prairie that I have ever seen. It stretches from the highway as far as the eye can see to red mountains in the distance. Also the grass is very abundant. Cut through the area is a large valley with a meandering river which is used to water the cropland. You get a very contrasting view.

Just now we smelled smoke. It keeps getting worse. The people in the truck behind us came up with a fire extinguisher. We radioed up to the cab to stop. We found that the smoke was coming out from under the bus. It turned out that the brake cylinder was too full of fluid and it must have overflowed and caught fire.

3:50 PM. We are now in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. We had ordered ahead for a whole lot of groceries and supplies so we picked them up at a warehouse and headed out. The truck is so full there is hardly any room to sit.

We went a ways outside of town and stopped at a wide place in the road, then unloaded everything and organized it and then re-loaded it. We fixed it so the supplies were placed in the order we would use them. There was over 3000 lbs. of food.

6:00 PM. We then drove to Edmonton and stopped in the Queen Elisabeth Park and camped out there.

(Read "My Mountain Climbing Trip in Alaska, Summer of 1955, Part 2" by John Holmes in the next issue of Minnekahta Messenger on Feb. 2, 2018.)

The Local Squirrel Problem

Contributed by Lorelei Marie

It seems that the local churches in our community have been having a major issue with squirrels, so here's what they've done:

The Presbyterian Church called a meeting to decide what to do about their squirrels. After much prayer, they concluded the squirrels were predestined to be there and they shouldn't interfere with God's Divine Will.

At the Baptist Church the squirrels had taken an interest in the baptistery. The deacons met and decided to put a water slide on the baptistery and let the squirrels drown themselves. The squirrels liked the slide and, unfortunately, knew instinctively how to swim, so twice as many squirrels showed up the following week.

The Methodist Church decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creatures. So, they humanely trapped their squirrels and set them free near the Baptist Church. Two weeks later the squirrels were back when the Baptists took down the water slide.

The Catholic Church came up with a very creative strategy. They baptized all the squirrels and consecrated them as members of the church. Now they only see them on Christmas and Easter.

Not much was heard from the Jewish Synagogue; they took the first squirrel and circumcised him. They haven't seen a squirrel since.

One for Each of My Brothers

Contributed by Bill Cutler

A cowboy, who just moved to Wyoming from Texas, walked into a bar and ordered three mugs of Bud. He sat in the back of the room, drinking a sip out of each one in turn. When he finished them, he came back to the bar and ordered three more.

The bartender approached and told the cowboy, "You know, a mug goes flat

after I draw it. It would taste better if you bought one at a time."

The cowboy replied, "Well, you see, I have two brothers. One is in Arizona, the other is in Colorado. When we all left our home in Texas, we promised that we'd drink this way to remember the days when we drank together. So I'm drinking one beer for each of my brothers and one for myself."

The bartender admitted that this was a nice custom, and left it there.

The cowboy became a regular in the bar, and always drank the same way. He ordered three mugs and drank them in turn.

One day, he came in and only ordered two mugs. All the regulars took notice and fell silent. When he came back to the bar for the second round, the bartender said, "I don't want to intrude on your grief, but I wanted to offer my condolences on your loss."

The cowboy looked quite puzzled for a moment, then a light dawned in his eyes and he laughed.

"Oh, no, everybody's just fine," he explained. "It's just that my wife and I joined the Baptist Church and I had to quit drinking."

"Hasn't affected my brothers though."

The Lord is My Shepherd

Contributed by Grits McMorrow

A Sunday school teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible, Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the verse.

Little Rickey was excited about the task—but he just couldn't remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line.

On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Rickey was nervous.

When it was his turn, Rickey stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I need to know."

Special Section

The Making of a Modern-Day Ghost Town

By Debbie Daybrest

I remember the first time I laid eyes on the tiny town of Bancroft, Idaho. I was in my early teen years and my parents were newly divorced. My mom wanted to make a fresh start, so she took over management of a small café that was owned by her aunt. The café had a little two-bedroom apartment in the back which was perfect for mom, my sister and me.

I remember saying to my brother, quoting a popular song of the day, “A town so small you can,” literally, “throw a rock from end to end.” And it was at that. When we moved there, the town’s main street consisted of: the café, a movie theater, grocery store, beauty shop, bar, and drug store with a soda fountain.

Main Street was anchored securely at one end by a post office and the other end was graced by the local church. The only school was for both elementary and high school students. Junior high consisted of a hallway on the high school’s upper level, the grade school was a wing on the lower level.

We had a city park, a football field and a small rodeo grounds that capped the end of our rural village. All places were well-used in times and seasons and the main street was a slow bustle of day to day activities. Old Highway 30 snaked its way past Main Street and the railroad ran adjacent to the highway.

I remember the café well—the cooler was always full of soda pop for my sister and me. Mom tried to limit our intake, but we were sneaky and always grabbed one on the way out. The grill was used for breakfast items in the morning and mostly hamburgers for lunch; occasionally we would get a big-spender that wanted steak.

Mom’s specialties were soups and stews. The customers couldn’t get enough sometimes. I worked as a waitress, busser, cashier, dishwasher and often cleaned up after close. We were my mom’s only employees because the place was so small.

The café prospered for a time but eventually my mom had to file for bankruptcy and

she lost the business. We stayed in the local area and mom worked for other restaurants and as a nurse in neighboring towns. Eventually the old café had to be torn down. It left a gaping hole in the middle of main street, sort of like a person with a missing front tooth.

The slow decline of the town started when the new Highway 30 was built, missing the town by several miles. The highway no longer brought visitors that were passing through, and local folk found it easier to go to the nearby, bigger towns, to do their shopping. The grocery store eventually closed too. The only reason the building continued to stand was that it had occupied apartments above it.

The movie theater also had a rocky existence in our small town; people watched a lot of television but not many went out to see a movie. I remember suggesting a movie to the owner that I had heard was fantastic: “Tommy,” about a pinball wizard.

The owner showed it, but it was a big flop with the residents who were used to westerns and action movies, not artistic operettas. I enjoyed watching it in the nearly empty theater. That building is gone now, too.

The grocery store was where we got most of our dry goods. The fresh selection wasn’t always the best, but it was where I bought my first kiwi—to me that was an exotic treat.

I remember once the entire area was hit by a terrible blizzard. They had to bring necessities to the store by snow cat. A carton of milk and a loaf of bread was a welcome sight after being snowed in for a week. Some even did their shopping on snowmobiles. It was fun to watch them come and go.

My mom would occasionally run out of something we needed for the café, so she would send me to the store to get a few things that would tide us over until our delivery man could come. I would always take a little of my own money, so I could buy me something as well. To keep the café

money separated from my money, I had a little saying. “Mother is always right,” (her money in my right pocket), “and whatever’s left is mine.” (my money in my left pocket). It kept me from having to count out the change to put back in the till.

The beauty shop was a small place of indulgence. Haircuts and nails done for a reasonable price and a good, hefty dose of town talk. If you needed to know something, that was where one could come for all the titillating details.

I remember having my hair done there for my wedding day. I wanted it in a French roll and the ladies were happy to do something different for a change. The feathered look was in for the younger gals and a few older ladies sported daring, blue-haired bobs. Oddly, the beauty shop is still there after all these years. I’m glad, a simple place for simple pleasures.

The bar was a tiny place I only entered once and never again afterward. When I was in my senior year of high school, we got away with a lot of pranks and foolishness by calling them “traditions.” One tradition was “the snake dance.” It was the custom to link arms with fellow classmates and weave our way down Main Street. We twisted and wrangled our way from business to business and place to place, all while laughing loudly and being majorly obnoxious.

And yes, we briefly snaked our way through the bar. The few patrons stared at us with wide eyes like they had gotten ahold of a bad batch of liquor and was seeing things, and we barely got out of there before choking to death on thick cigarette smoke. Yes, the bar still stands to this day and may be the busiest place in town, besides the church.

As for the drug store and soda fountain, I guess I need to borrow my husband’s memories for this place; I was only in it a few times and don’t remember much about it.

My husband liked to get milkshakes at the fountain after a long day of working as a farm hand. His boss would take him in for a bit of refreshment and my husband loved malts.

(See Town on page 7)

Town (cont. from page 6)

The owner of the shop liked to play a game with his customers called “ship, captain and crew.” The customer was given a set of dice. To get the ship they would have to roll a six, the captain was a one, and whomever had the biggest crew with the count on the remaining dice, won. The prize was a free soda drink. The problem was, if you lost, you owed the proprietor double the price of your drink. My husband never told me how many times he lost but it didn’t keep him from going back again and again.

The old building that housed the drug store is almost in crumbled ruins now. The owner might not even be alive anymore

and with several earthquakes that have happened in the area last year, we were surprised to see the old place still standing. We did notice one wall was propped up with supports. A crumbling relic of a bygone day. Sad.

The church, where my husband and I were married, is still there and well used. It is the hub of all things social, with the exception of the bar. Sunday services, weekday seminary classes, youth activities, dances, town events of all sorts. I think if it wasn’t for the church, the town would be a very ghostly place indeed.

I am grateful for the chapters it added to my life. I wasn’t much for going to church when I was a teen, but I grew to find faith

while I lived near this small town and remember with fondness many of the people that touched our lives while we lived there.

Time has marched on with a fierce, unforgiving cadence and I often find myself remembering the years I lived in Idaho. My husband and I always refer to Idaho as our home. When someone asks us where we’re going on vacation we always answer “Home.”

And I guess that’s what Bancroft, Idaho means to me: a place, on the face of God’s green earth, to call “Home.” I miss it. A ghost town I remember with gladness and one that, occasionally, haunts my dreams.

Mystic Origins

By T.L. Matt

One of my favorite spots in the Hills is the old townsite of Mystic, now a ghost town, but a town with an interesting history.

There is a Mystic, Connecticut from which this town was probably named. It’s a city of a few thousand people and is famous for its Mystic Pizza (you may remember the movie of the same name made in 1988 with Julia Roberts and company). There is also a Mystic, Iowa, a town of a few hundred, and a Mystic, Colorado, another ghost town.

I always wanted to meet Russel George Frink, of the Frink family, who pioneered Mystic and served as a caretaker of the Mystic Historic Townsite. Since my maiden name is Frink, I thought we might be related, as I had a George Russell Frink in my line.

Russel passed away in 2013, but I have since done research that shows his ancestry is German and mine is English/French. Maybe 15 generations back—who knows?

This remote spot, high in the Black Hills, was founded the same year of Custer’s Last Stand (1876), and was once named “Sitting Bull” (railroad officials changed the name to “Mystic”).

Mystic was the site of placer mining. In 1889, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad—the first line in the Black Hills—was constructed. Not only was there a 10-stamp mill built in Mystic, but also some experimental operations. A few succeeded, others failed.

In 1900, Chicago investors put one million dollars into a huge, four-story plant that had a state-of-the-art electro-cyanide process. It was called the Mystic Reduction Mill. There is a version that remains today that uses electrolysis to extract precious metals from ore. The Reduction Mill didn’t produce as expected and was demolished in 1913.

Mystic became a two-railroad town when the Crouch Line was born in 1906. The Dakota, Wyoming and Missouri laid the 34-mile track from Rapid City to Mystic. There were smelters in Rapid City and the Crouch Line connected these to Black Hills mining districts and the Wyoming coalfields.

The new line traversed a very steep grade, made 14 complete circles and crossed 100 bridges over Rapid Creek. What a ride! If only we could experience it today!

By 1909, Mystic had the first electric placer mining dredge in the Black Hills. It had 78 buckets that dug up earth and could move 55,000 yards per month. This was a brief venture, as it proved too costly and the dredge was shipped to Oregon.

A sawmill was built on the foundation of the Mystic Reduction Mill in 1918 and George Frink, Russel’s father, bought it in 1919. George kept the sawmill running until 1952. He also served as the postmaster for 25 years.

President Calvin Coolidge visited Mystic in 1927. There is a picture of George driving the wagon in which President Coolidge rode, as he was taken sightseeing around the area.

President Coolidge even signed Russel’s baby book (www.historynet.com/ghost-towns-mystic-south-dakota.htm)

In 1930, the rustic and picturesque McCahan Memorial Chapel was built. It was named for a Philadelphia woman who funded it. The Frink Sawmill provided the building materials and community men supplied the labor. Regular Presbyterian services have not been held since 1952, but the building serves as a romantic place for weddings occasionally.

McCahan Memorial Chapel is now on Black Hills National Forest land and is protected. Both the chapel and the Townsite of Mystic are National Historic Sites.

The last passenger train stopped in Mystic in July, 1947, and the last freight train ran through the community in November, 1983 (www.jalhost.net/TravelBlog/2015/08/13/a-ghost-town-named-mystic).

There are more visitors to Mystic now, as it is on the Mickelson Trail and there is a trailhead building with a picnic table. Also, an informative map of the gold mining town, listing foundations and sites to be discovered, is posted. There are 21 sites listed, including Brown’s Cabin (the earliest structure), Assay Office, Ice House, School, Section House, Blacksmith Shop, Frink Residence, Crouch Line Railroad Bed and others.

I will definitely want to make Mystic a place to revisit this summer. I’m drawn to remote areas high in the Black Hills. It seems the higher I travel, the closer I feel to the Creator of these impressive mountains. How blessed we are to live here!

This May Interest You

Augusto Cesar Sandino, Part 2

By Larry Stocker

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.

Unfortunately, the army's main purpose is war. That is a real problematic concept. If you are a person of conscience you might have a problem in the army—but not necessarily. If your conscience tells you that your love of country permits you to follow all orders with complete confidence in the wisdom of those higher up in the chain-of-command, you will be all right. There will be no troubles with your conscience. No lost sleep.

If, however, you, as an individual soldier, begin to question the role of the army and the use of deadly force as an agent for peace in a world where half the population doesn't have enough food, there are plenty of places for a crisis of conscience to spring up.

It becomes even more urgent if you are a student of Latin American history and you see how the U.S. military, under orders from above, always seems to have supported the interests of the wealthy and the powerful against the interests of the ordinary people.

A crisis of conscience is what ruined my comfortable life as an enlisted man in the U.S. Army. Vietnam was not a cause I could believe in. I have always felt that—given the right cause—things might have been different—not just with me but with a lot of guys.

There have been movements in Latin America in which ordinary people—without any induction ceremonies, no formal ranks or pay grades, no stripes to be sewn on their shirts, no knowledge of where their next meal is going to come from—suddenly just jump up, follow their consciences and take up arms to fight against regimes so oppressive that fighting against them just seems like the natural thing to do.

These would be the kinds of fights I would have been inclined to support, that is, if you are going to rationalize a reason for going to war at all.

A long time ago, more than one hundred years, sometime in the fall of 1912, somewhere near Masaya, Nicaragua, some U.S. Marines were conducting the dead body of liberal General Benjamin Zeledon through the streets in an oxcart to be buried in the cool heights of Catarina overlooking, in the distance, the milky waters of Lake Nicaragua. The Marines had been defending the U.S. puppet President Adolfo Diaz from a popular uprising.

Nicaragua, as many Nicaraguans believe, is a country of poets. I think they are right. Quite naturally, poets would have had more practice using their consciences than people in other kinds of occupations. That seems to be a point in a problem with the relations between the big country of the United States and the small country of Nicaragua. It's the conscience.

Nicaragua just can't seem to go along with the way the big guys in Washington want things to be. It would be better for their future if they would just cooperate, but they won't. The poet's conscience keeps getting in the way. It's like the country is full of young, idealistic Privates who are just unwilling to fork over their individuality and give up. It's as if they think that they are right.

Watching the marines that day as they conducted the general's body through the town was a short, skinny, 17-year-old boy. He was wondering what in the world those foreign soldiers were doing in his country. The marines took no notice of him. They didn't know his name. It wouldn't be until later but, by and by, they would know it. They would know it well. His name was Augusto Cesar Sandino.

Nowadays, you see the mysterious image of Sandino all over the place in Nicaragua. It's the first thing you see at the airport, which is named after him, but during the 40-year rule of the notorious Somoza dictatorship, images of Sandino were banned.

Not any more. Sandino's picture is back again. He's popular and visible, but still mysterious. Most tourists arriving at the airport in Managua may know what hotel they are going to stay at, which beach they are going to, what colonial town they are going to walk around in, but few of them know who this man is and what his picture represents.

Augusto Cesar Sandino is always depicted wearing a big, wide-brimmed hat and high, laced-up boots. He is always the

shortest guy in the picture and he inevitably has the most determined look on his face. It has been said that Sandino was the inspiration for Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and Hugo Chavez; that he was the original guerrilla fighter.

I am certainly no expert on all these things but I do know that in 1927 a special U.S. envoy named Henry L. Stimson was appointed by President Calvin Coolidge to go to Nicaragua. He brokered a deal to end a civil war by forcing the liberal forces to lay down their arms, thereby protecting the conservative presidency of Adolfo Diaz. And, for good measure, Stimson brought into Nicaragua a battalion of U.S. marines to prove that he meant business.

It wasn't the first time the marines had come to Nicaragua. It was starting to be a pretty regular thing.

All parties went along with the deal except for one man. Once this one particular guy got something in his mind, it was pretty hard to get it out. My Dad would have said he had a one-track mind or a mind like a steel trap or something like that.

Augusto Cesar Sandino was still stuck on the question he asked back in 1912. He was still trying to figure out what these foreign soldiers were doing in Nicaragua.

This time he made a promise. He said he didn't care what Henry L. Stimson or President Coolidge would say, he didn't care how many liberals laid down their arms, he didn't care how many battalions of U.S. Marines came to Nicaragua; Augusto Cesar Sandino pledged to fight until all those marines were gone. That was his single-minded objective. He didn't think the U.S. Marines had any business in Nicaragua. That's all there was to it.

(Funny thing is: if Coolidge and Stimson would have taken a poll of the American people at the time, which is something they would have never, never done, they would undoubtedly have found that the American voters would have agreed with Augusto Cesar Sandino.)

Sandino put on his big hat and laced up his boots and took to the mountains, just a few men at first. "This is going to be a guerrilla war," he said.

"What's that?" The men asked.

"I don't know, we'll make it up as we go along," he said.

(Read "Augusto Cesar Sandino, Part 3" by Larry Stocker in the next issue of Minnekahta Messenger on Feb. 2, 2018.)

History of Bourbon, Part 1

By Jeff Consoer

Before there was bourbon there was corn liquor, which has one key ingredient: corn, aka maize. But before there was maize, about 7000 years of plant genetics had to develop. And it did, almost like magic.

Modern day maize traces its evolution back to south central Mexico and a grass called “teosinte.” That grass eventually made it to North America, and can be found here today. But during the transition early farmers also evolved it, season by season, through trial and error, into the corn plant and crop of today.

What makes this interesting is how fast the evolution occurred. Suddenly, about 2600 years ago, this new crop appears. Grass tufts with small seed pods turn into tall rigid stalks with huge ears of corn seed in the relative blink of an eye, genetically speaking. And it happened without any formal genetic science as a guide. The actual study of genetics, even the term “gene” was not invented until the late 19th century (Gregor Mendel, the “father of genetics,” was not even born until 1822!).

How was this possible? That is probably best explained by a farmer, but maize/corn appeared in human history almost overnight.

As an aside, when colonials were introduced to maize, the term “corn seed” did not exist. In fact, it would have been a somewhat silly reference at the time. In England maize was unknown and the term corn was just another name for a “seed” or “kernel” of any crop (i.e., barleycorn). But as maize took hold of the early American economy it became THE seed, the corn kernel. From the beginning, that yellow kernel resonated in the New World.

Now leap forward to European colonization of North America. As Europeans landed in America, they were introduced to maize as a dietary staple. Native Americans taught the new arrivals about its value and uses. And then the Europeans found new uses to fit their lifestyle. But corn liquor was not quite ready to be invented yet. The British crown needed to unintentionally spark that development.

Here is how they did it:

Discovery of the New World started in South America and the Caribbean. Eventually, England became a major land holder in that region. Sugar cane was an abundant crop and sugar had obvious value in England, so it was harvested in great volumes to be exported.

One of the major uses of sugar was in making molasses. Boiling sugar down into molasses greatly reduced storage and shipping costs without losing any of its market value back in England, so many barrels of molasses were created.

At the time, the northeastern American seaboard was a popular pivot point for shipping products to and from England. British molasses (and also French molasses) could easily be acquired by the colonials as it collected and passed through New England seaports.

This arrangement gave colonials cheap access to molasses, which was especially important for making rum. Rum was the most popular distillate of the time in both England and America. (No, it wasn't Bud Light, dilly, dilly.)

Then one day it occurred to King James II and parliament that the colonials were paying less for molasses (and rum) than they were. Time for a tax, eventually known as the “Molasses Act.”

Keep in mind that “colonials” were colonials because they had left England (and Europe) in search of something new and hopefully better. They rankled at the idea of paying more money to purchase a product already sitting on their docks that came from their side of the globe. This tax seemed unjustified and unaffordable. So now what?

The colonials had become quite resourceful, often repurposing materials out of survival necessity. And since many of them were from Scotland and Ireland, they were quite familiar with distilling spirits. All they really needed was a fruit or grain with lots of sugars and starches and... CORN!

The corn liquor “cottage” industry (literally) was born.

Now, anyone who has tasted corn liquor straight out of a still knows that this product still had quite a ways to go before it would develop into bourbon. But it was a beginning.


Next, a country needed to be born. So, then, who turned corn liquor into bourbon? How and why? And who came up with the name “Bourbon?”

(Read “History of Bourbon, Part 2” by Jeff Consoer in the next issue of Minnekahta Messenger on Feb. 2, 2018.)

Bourbon-County

SPEAKEASY

Another Time and Place



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Rhyme Or Reason

The Devil's Eye

By Carrie Cofer

There's fire on the mountain
and fire in the sky.
It's getting' hard to breathe
and there's somethin' in my eye.

We really need the water, Lord,
we need it right away.
There's a dozen houses down,
that's what the firemen say.

There's fire on the mountain,
even fire while it rains.
There's fire in the barn we built
burning up the grain.

Please send the tanker planes to us
and let their aim be true.
We need every ounce of what they drop
to drown this devil's brew.

There's fire on the mountain,
there's fire in the sky,
the clouds and smoke all look the same.
You can see the Devil's eye!

We've 100 families homeless now,
thank Heaven no one's hurt.
The firetruck tankers are coming down;
there's no water up there, just dirt.

There's fire on the mountain.
Fire climbs the trees.
It waves its arms and shouts aloud
gets picked up by the breeze.

It flies away, across the road,
new fuel to feed its dance,
running through the valleys
and over the Walker Ranch.

Fire still flickers on the mountain.
As tankers starve the frantic flame
the wind brings in rain as well.
The Fire Demon dies, now who do we blame.



For You

By Andy Skadberg

Who is this
Who am I
We are immersed in sensual expression
Pressing from Endless Love
Combining and Sharing in tangled
Blending smoothly in twisted embrace
You, My Love
Awaken in my heart, its knowing
Moving through experiences
Love's kind embrace
You catalyze the fires of my soul
To origins unknown in this form
But altogether sourcing
All That Is
I Am That
But without you I could not extend
My Masterpiece
I complete you, in my fitting
Into your Deep Love composure
Feelings so deep
Forever's angst
To couple and share our essences
In human form
As angels dancing
Passionately
Together

Life on the Rio Grande

By Larry Stocker

The sun was laughing high on a pillar of solid-seeming clouds. "I'm going to go behind this thing, Larry," he was saying. "You won't see me until tomorrow." I was still driving the car down Picacho Avenue wondering if the sun would, at least, wait until I got to the edge of the river. Something made me want to hurry. I didn't want to hurry but there was something in my gut that said, "Hurry."

Anyway I didn't do it, but I wondered why it was there. There is no set time to be at the river on Thursday. "Somewhere around sunset"—that's as precise as it gets! This is one place where you don't have to

hurry and when you are late you are still on time!

There was a boy by the river last night. He saw the guitar and found it more interesting than the fishing poles operated by the small set of twilight fisherman dispersed along the banks. My companion and I pointed a few songs at him and he pretended to have a guitar in his hands strumming his two-year-old stomach with the fingers of his right hand, his left holding the imaginary guitar's neck.

I don't know what his name was but I know he was a member of "Baseball – Home Run League" because that's what his shirt said. Looked like he had new shoes too. It made me think of the times, relatively long ago, when I got new shoes.

Getting new shoes, when you are a kid, is a pretty big thing. This boy was happy with his shoes and, when he wasn't playing the guitar, ran all over the place in them. I used to think my new shoes made me run faster.

The sun did—as he said he would—disappear beyond the impenetrable clouds. No great spectacular display of color was available to our searching eyes on this mid-August evening.

Not to complain—we have had luck spectacular enough: water is still flowing in the Rio Grande and we have had plenty of rain! The desert is green.

"Life on the Rio Grande" is a weekly email blog written by Larry Stocker. This story was published on Aug. 15, 2014.

Well, If You Ask Us

I Like Piecing Puzzles Together

By Grits McMorrow

Once again, I am running late in getting the paper out. Producing a quality product like the *Minnekahta Messenger* takes a lot of time. And, I gotta tell you, I think this issue is awesome.

As my friends know, I am grateful for the contributions of time and effort that the contributing writers and poets make to share their creative works. I used to write more than I do now; those who lived in the Southern Hills twenty years ago know that I wrote many of the stories that appeared in the alternate newspapers I published back then.

But these days I am more interested in the non-writing contributions that help produce this newsletter. What are they? you may wonder. Well, someone has to generate the graphic layout (which I designed last year before the first issue was published). Sure, I use a template based on that design, but every two weeks I have to fit the new content into that layout. And, trust me, it takes much time.

It is like a puzzle. All the stories and poems, and the occasional ads, are the puzzle pieces. I am the team member who has to fit the pieces together. Some pieces have their own page section in which they are placed. For example, Andy's stories always go in "If You Could Change One Thing" and Carrie's poems appear in "Rhyme Or Reason" and Larry's travel adventures are found in "Off The Beaten Path." Other contributions must be placed where they are most appropriate or, in some cases, wherever I can find space.

I am also the team member who designs the ads. I really like the ad I designed for Jeff Consoer's Hot Springs business, Bourbon-County Speakeasy. I spent several hours researching, selecting, and extracting that car image, but I wanted an ad that was as unique as his cocktail lounge. (I also designed the license plate.)

For those of you who are antique car enthusiasts, that automobile is a 1928 Cadillac 341A Town Sedan and was owned by Chicago mobster Alphonse Gabriel Capone, a man who attained notoriety during America's Prohibition era. What better vehicle to use in an ad for a twenty-first century "speakeasy."

Well, my story is finished and, with the clock showing a quarter past eight at night on Friday, January 19, I must start programming the hyperlinks before I can begin the paper's distribution. Time to put this issue to bed!

Driving to Igloo

By T.L. Matt

Most often on Friday nights, we opt to go to Mogul Mart for a date of sorts. We usually get dark chocolate ice cream. This time, my husband got a dish of ice cream and I got a small package of salted pumpkin seeds (no sugar on my current diet)—and were they ever salty! I ate one and then sat there glaring at him. Anyway, he said afterward, "I think we need to drive to Igloo."

A drive to Igloo, the old Army Ordnance Depot, is through rather sparse terrain. Along some parts of the drive, the terrain resembles what you might find on the moon. I always look for animals and wildlife and there are next to none, well, except for a few horses and cattle close to Edgemont.

I'm always excited when I see a black form in the distance, but am disappointed when it turns out to be a large roll of fencing wire. When we get to Provo, with its sadly deserted homes falling apart and the piles of junked cars, we can just barely see the remnants of Igloo. A few buildings remain and the rows of bunkers in the distance. You hardly ever meet a vehicle coming or going.

So, why drive to Igloo? Because there is so little to distract, it is the perfect time to meditate and evaluate. When there is nothing but rolling hills and earth and sky, we feel somehow closer to God and can free ourselves from everyday cares and try to learn simplicity. A calmness fills our souls as we sort out what is really important—friends and family.

The drama of day-to-day disappointments and failures seems to take a backseat as we feel a part of this little piece of Creation. Stresses just melt away.

When we got home, I had forgotten all about the nasty pumpkin seed and my ice cream jealousy. Coming into a warm home was a comfy pleasure. The glow lasted with me for hours. I don't resent drives to Igloo—I look forward to them. You can find your own Igloo on Friday nights if you really try!

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Iyeska (cont. from front cover)

Pow-wow was a victim, a micro example of the same macro dynamic at play for most Indians—people trapped in an alien reality which refuses to respect and honor them for who and what they are. To cope with this reality, Indians turn to drugs and alcohol. The hybrid social constructs unravel. The result is a pathetic chaos that destroys families and then individual lives.

This same process was internally destroying Pow-wow. Yes, they had raised him in their privileged world, taught him their values, loved him, fed him, clothed him, educated him, but Pow-wow never developed all the valuable signature aspects of being a First American—the humor, the acceptance of people for who they are, the humble spirituality, but had retained all the self-destructive aspects, the anger, the alcoholism, and was now nothing but a self-pandering weakling. Adopting him out to White people had spared him from nothing. He was a lost soul.

Not that I am a found soul. No assimilated success story here. I am an enrolled member of the Oglala Lakota Tribe, but I am no Lakota. I have a Welsh surname and a Wasicu father, but I am no Wasicu.

For most of my life I have failed to finish whatever I started, made stupid mistakes, but I have managed to build a halfway decent life on the rubble of those mistakes.

People give me far less trouble than they once did. Maybe it's because I chomp on raw onions and beat them back with halitosis. Whatever the case, others don't often brace me with butt ugly racism these days. Here's an example of how that once went.

As a young journalist in North Dakota I was invited over to the printer's house for dinner. He had a nice family and I considered him my friend. However, despite the fact I am conspicuously brown, he had no clue I was breed Lakota until a coworker informed him. Didn't take him long to track me down—"I just found out you're an Indian!"

Apparently, some years before, he had scuffled with Lakota guys at a kegger, but our friendship and mutual respect eventually allowed him to see past all that resentment and anger, and our friendship deepened. He came to accept Indians in a more positive and tolerant light.

Okay, none of that is true. What really happened is he yelled

in my face—"I hate the sons-of-bitches!"

Far as I know, to this day, he's hating on Indians as much as he ever did.

Maybe you reach a point where you are polite to both sides of your heritage, but you refuse to be mistreated by either.

You make a life somewhere in a limbo between, where you are comfortable, but that means few friends, and maybe you meet a good woman, a Wasicu woman, but you love her just for her, and you get married, and raise three boys, and you make damn sure to raise them with the love and respect you did not receive as a child.

You don't smoke, you don't drink, and you maintain a home where they feel safe and secure. You think you have done the best you can.

Maybe one day the youngest is sitting on your lap and he says, "Dad, you're different. You're brown!"

You say, "That's because I'm part Lakota. That makes you part Indian, too."

And your boy laughs, because maybe he thinks Dad's just joshing him again, and he says, "No, Dad, I'm not Indian. I'm human."

"What is an Iyeska? Not Even Most Iyeska Know" is the title of a journal post by James Giago Davies. It was published on Mar. 5, 2015 on the author's Facebook home page, www.facebook.com/iyeskajournal/.

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/).

Laura (cont. from front cover)

Eventually, when help came and spring finally arrived, people recovered, although living in South Dakota at that time wasn't always easy in any season.

Reading the series of books by Laura gave me such pleasure when I was young. How blessed I felt after reading of their sometimes dangerous circumstances and how envious I felt at their closeness as a family.

Years later, when I was working as a teacher's aide at Boyd/Berry School in Springfield, Missouri, I was given an assignment to present a unit to the class on Laura Ingalls Wilder.

The teacher pointed me to a trunk full of material. I picked out a tape, "Laura Ingalls Wilder's Songs From Home" and other items and took them home to review.

When I put the tape into the machine, I almost fell over, when I heard the commentator say, "Emma Frink playing her composition, 'Ripples on the Gasconade' on Laura's old pump organ."

What? That's my great-grandmother! I had never heard of any connection with our family. Why? Laura had been my idol forever!

I later found the book, *Little House in the Ozarks*, edited by Stephen W. Hines (©1991) in which is a picture showing Laura and Emma seated together in the Mansfield Library. Laura wrote a chapter in the book on my great-grandparents, Harvey and Emma, entitled "Pioneering on an Ozark Farm."

My grandmother was a music teacher and composer and grandfather was a lawyer. They left their fine home in town to experience pioneering adventures on a piece of property near Mansfield. Evidently they missed the life they had enjoyed as children.

Also, there was a chapter regarding Emma and her sister Kate traveling to Laura's home to invite her to become a member of the Athenians, a local literary society.

According to Virginia Hartley, a now deceased cousin, Laura and Rose, Laura's daughter, would visit Emma and Harvey on their farm often. When Almanzo died, Harvey would chauffeur Laura around the town.

My Aunt Polly, a nurse, helped take care of Laura in her last days on earth. I don't know why I wasn't informed of all this as a child and I had to find out by chance.

Or was it chance? I can be sustained and encouraged as I face trials when I read Laura's words:

"It is always best to be honest and truthful; to make the most of what we have; to be happy with simple pleasures; to be cheerful in adversity and have courage in danger. Things of real value do not change with the passing of years." *Wright County, Missouri History and Families, Volume 2* ©1993.

Dance (cont. from front cover) each intermission. Unfortunately, my career was shortened when I pulled up my skirt to show a bit

of the fancy petticoat underneath at the wrong time—not catching the cue as I had practiced beforehand. I guess the sponsors of the department store were not amused.

I still love to dance and can often be found dancing to Ike and Tina Turner while washing dishes—with the curtains closed, of course.

My husband actually took me to a street dance in Hot Springs not many years ago. We were drawn to this event because we heard they would be playing music from the 50's and 60's.

After waiting for a few other courageous couples to start dancing, we did our best to "show them what we had." We were doing pretty well, in a rusty sort of way, until he flung me out and whipped me back with such force that I fell against him and we both went down, sprawled on the pavement! I'm not sure how many people saw the catastrophe—I shudder to think!

Anyway, at the time, I remembered a young, handsome man reaching down to me to pick me up off the street. I told my husband about that and he said, "Terry, that was me." I must have been a little stunned by the fall.

Have you been to the monthly dances at Buffalo Gap? If not, you should check it out. Congenial people, good food and lots of great, old-fashioned fun.

In these modern times, we think we have to be constantly entertained by others. Our ancestors had to provide their own music and entertainment in the form of dances and singing together, often highlighted by picnics and games. You didn't have to sign up for cable TV or spend big bucks going out to eat or to a nightclub. Entertainment was a means to reach out to others, share talents, make friends and form bonds in the community.

The people at Buffalo Gap are on a mission to provide not only entertainment, but a means to get acquainted with some very fine people. It is also a family-friendly environment.

If you made a resolution to better your health in the New Year, dancing is a great way to exercise and get fit in 2018. I'm going to exercise my way to good health—and have some fun, too—at the Buffalo Gap dances. Hope to see you there!