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VOLUME II

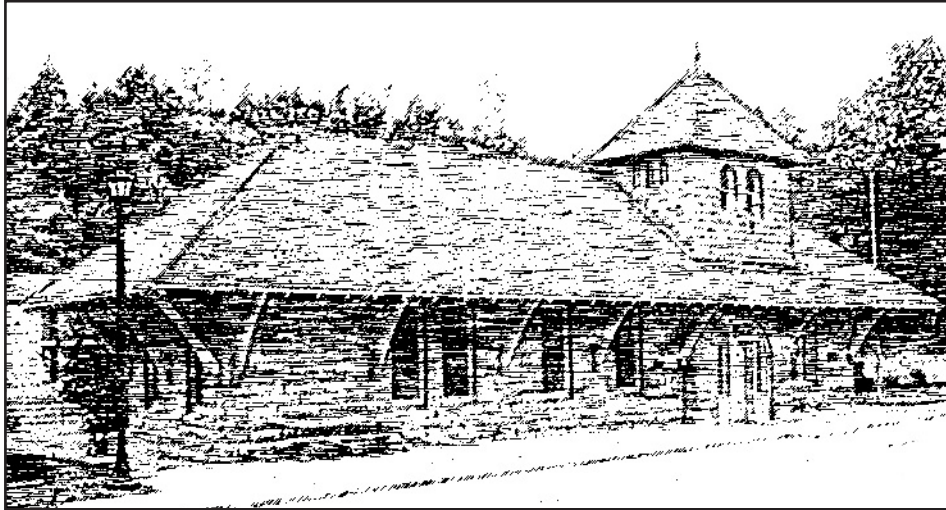
MINNEKAHTA PUBLISHING, LLC

NUMBER 18

SOUTHWESTERN SD.

BRINGING OUR COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

FRIDAY, DEC. 22, 2017



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Minnekahta Messenger



VOLUME II

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NUMBER 18

SOUTHWESTERN SD.

BRINGING OUR COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

FRIDAY, DEC. 22, 2017

WE SUPPORT OUR FIRST RESPONDERS THANK YOU ALL LIVES MATTER

ICE, SNOW AND CHRISTMAS
By D.E. Matt
Special Correspondent

When I was growing up, the song, "White Christmas" used to seem like a way to torment grade schoolers. We had sleds, but December would bring snow and that would disappear for Christmas vacation.

Christmas in North Dakota seemed like my dream come true. I got a bicycle with a motorcycle-style headlight and a tank that held a powerful 6-volt battery. It had a luggage carrier and the tires even had fancy stylish white sidewalls. I hoped to be the envy of the whole fifth grade.

My brother and I would spend twenty minutes just getting dressed up like Eskimos so we could ride bicycles down to the outdoor ice rink with a warming shack. The cute little blonde girl from my class got me to reluctantly agree to hold hands with her and skate around to the Strauss waltzes played over the P.A.

I just knew I was going to grow up with the world at my control. After all, I had the best bicycle Montgomery Ward had to offer!

THE JAMES BLYTHE HOME IN LEAD CITY & THE LEGEND OF THE CHRISTMAS SPIDER

By T.L. Matt

When our "ship came in" and we received money from selling our land in Montana, we were hot to buy a home in Lead, South Dakota.

People thought we were pretty crazy buying a home seven miles from a ski area, and perhaps we were. We fell in love with an unusual house on Galena Street that had been built in 1900.

What was really unusual was that Galena was a non-existent street that used to run in front of the house. It had probably been

closed for at least 100 years. It was too steep to maintain and now was only grass. But it was still used as an address, as if it were paved with concrete and stone.

I discovered the identities of the original owners of our new Galena residence at the Lawrence County Courthouse. James Blythe was born in 1846 in Cornwall, England. His wife, Emma, was from Durham, England. They had ten children, but only three were living at the time of the 1900 census. After the Blythe family moved away, countless others owned the home.

The one big drawback of the house, of many (we later discovered), were the 29 steps we needed to traverse down from West Addie Street to the home's entrance. However, in my journal I read, "I was spiritually connected with it when I entered, knowing it needed much love and care: a maternal instinct, I guess."

After getting good timber and jacks in place to buttress the building, we felt more secure. The grandchildren loved the rather unique trap door that led to the basement and never tired of going up and down the steps.

There was a small fenced backyard and a rather large deck facing it. What a relief to just let our terrier, Spunky out the back door. Unfortunately, my husband lost his gold wedding band down the drain while bathing our dear little pooch. It remains there today, somewhere in the innards of the plumbing.

My relatives were always mispronouncing the name "Lead" as they knew this was a mining area and thought that metal was being mined. Lead is processed from a mineral called *galena*.

When a big vein of ore was found that led to the rich gold deposits in the future Homestake vicinity, the area was named Lead City. A "lead" to riches, indeed!

There was an enormous pine tree poking through a hole in the back yard deck. It had grown so much that the circumference of

the hole was now restricting the tree's growth.

It hovered over our bedroom window, so we respectfully said kind things to "Mr. Tree" hoping he wouldn't fall on us during a storm. We made plans to enlarge the hole in the deck.

One winter, 83 inches of snow fell in three days. Now we knew why we saw doors leading to nowhere on second floors of homes here. When we finally had the courage to open the front door, snow blocked three-fourths of it.

Don had to shovel a tunnel for Spunky to get into the back yard and back—a necessary chore.

The snow removal on West Addie Street was excellent, as it connected to the Lead School above. There was a requirement, though—you had to remove your vehicle and park on a street down below because the snowplows couldn't navigate otherwise.

Since we lived 29 steps down the mountain from the road, you couldn't always see the orange
(see Home on back cover)

STOP HOLIDAY SUGAR CRAVINGS IN THEIR TRACKS WITH THIS ONE FOOD

By William Cole, D.C.

The holidays are filled with family and festivities. And with these festivities come an endless supply of holiday cookies and treats. Sugar cookies, candy canes, and eggnog abound and even those with the strongest willpower can have a hard time resisting these once-a-year goodies.

So what's a health-minded person to do? Because, let's be honest, sticking to the veggie tray isn't going to make for a very fun party.

One of my top choices to not only satisfy my sweet tooth, but also keep my inflammation levels and blood sugar in check, is a little guy I call fat bomb.

What are fat bombs?

Fat bombs are super-healthy and easy to make—two things that are essential during the busy holiday season.

These are high in—yup, you guessed it—fats. My goal as a functional medicine practitioner is to use food as medicine as much as possible. Many people find themselves on a sugar roller coaster that leave them feeling fatigued and bloated.

Healthy fats are a slow, sustainable form of energy that can be a powerful tool to curb sugar cravings that awaken the hungry beast within.

Your brain is comprised of 60 percent fat. We need fat for fuel and always have. Since birth, we have relied on fat in the form of breast milk for brain development and energy. Even for those who drank formula, MCT oil (derived from coconut and palm oil) is added to most formulas, as a source of healthy fats.

For your brain to work properly, it requires a lot of energy.
(see Cravings on back cover)

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If You Could Change One Thing

Dear God – Today’s Prayer for Peace

By Andy Skadberg

Today I pray to bring peace to the world in the following ways:

To breathe consciously and appreciate the gift of my life, and remember to be grateful.

To teach people and help them really learn and believe in Reverence for Life.

I visualize and take the actions I can to create governments and companies that are responsible for correct actions toward people and the Earth.

I visualize and take actions for making technology and the media to be an instrument of Peace and Love providing entertaining, educational, and empowering messages to all people to empower them and bring Peace and harmony to the world.

Today I visualize and take the actions to Share with people through my teaching the wonder and glory of the world and the cosmos and how special each person, each flower, each tree and each animal is.

Today I visualize and take the actions to assist people to understand that we have made government and business and money and technologies to SERVE us, the people, and that the Spirit of Love guides all of life and our opportunity is NOW to create heaven on Earth—a paradise.

Finally, I pray that all people understand how powerful, wonderful, beautiful and spectacular they are in the eyes of their God. The only way to find peace is in their own hearts. Their actions should be governed by the Golden Law: “Do unto others, as you would have done unto you” – and this means all of Life.

My Vision in a Nutshell

I made a decision to “change the world” in 2005, (for my children, when I knew much less than I do now, about vibrational energy and such) and revalidated it in 2007—something like how Gandhi must have made a decision to free India or Norman Borlaug made a decision to feed everyone.

My understanding is that if we allow our connection to Gaia, to our Divine Mother,

to be made, we will find ourselves ushered into a more balanced way of being. I have been given insights that this process is really so simple—to relax and become re-aquainted, to be conscious of our breath and know that all of us are the creators of our world.

So the process is quite simple, not complicated, because when we tap into our own breath and begin to treat ourselves with kindness and respect, and learn how our divine guidance program works—our feelings—we will be perfectly guided and then that re-creation will be guided like a Divine symphony to a realization of Peace and Harmony.

My aim is to usher in this Peace, one person at a time. To empower each individual to know the truth of Love—that they are that Love and that they are motivated by that Love.

There is nothing to fear, as all is in perfect order. I don’t fear whether the sun will shine, or my molecules or the galaxies will hold together. Why would I fear about the tiny systems that we—I guess a bunch of errant children—could somehow be outside of the Divine orchestration?

So my Vision is that we “re-create” the world into the paradise that we all know in our hearts it can be. We can each create the world of our dreams that we have been afraid to state boldly, because there has been a lot of discouragement of such things. And by the way, there has been a purpose for that too—it is just difficult to grasp.

All I know is that even the things I have not liked have taught me a lot about Love, Service, Patience, Vision and a desire to be a better Andy, each day.

I continue to believe in “ever expanding possibilities” and as I do that I am happier and happier each day. I realize that what I was afraid of is not real, and that when I go through my fears I always find wonder and joy and mystery—and on and on it will go until I return to the One, complete.

“Dear God – Today’s Prayer for Peace” and “My Vision in a Nutshell” are titles of blogposts by Andy Skadberg. “Dear God – Today’s Prayer for Peace” was published on Feb. 10, 2011 on the author’s website, <http://13lightmessages.blogspot.com/2011/02/dear-god-todays-prayer-for-peace.html>. “My Vision in a Nutshell” was published on Feb. 16, 2011, at <http://13lightmessages.blogspot.com/2011/02/my-vision-in-nutshell.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.

Outside My Door

By T.L. Matt

How can you tell a chickadee
about love?

You give him crumbs on a tray.

You call him softly, quietly
so as not to frighten him.

You wish to pet him tenderly
on his soft, brown-gray back.

Little snow-bird, have I kept
you alive this winter?—Me?

He chuckles at me, swinging
high on a fir limb.

How can you tell a chickadee
about love?

You can’t—for he is Love.

Love is a small, fragile thing,
easily afraid, always wary,

But coming back for crumbs
each winter

when the wind grows cold.



There's Something To Be Said

The Kindred Spirit By Barbara Hauseman

The True Meaning of Christmas

As a child, I was taught that Christmas is about the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Nothing else at this time of year is more blessed.

I learned many Christmas stories from Sunday school lessons and sermons and from listening to songs sung by church choirs. Hearing these stories and songs as an adult still brings joy to me.

Mary and Joseph were tired from a long, difficult journey, especially Mary who was with child. They were seeking a resting

place for Mary to give birth. Not finding a room at the inn, they were told to use a nearby stable. Surrounded by cows and sheep, it was in this stable that the Baby Jesus was born.

A bright star twinkled high in the sky to mark the location of the blessed event. An angel appeared before some shepherds who were tending their flocks of sheep. The angel told the shepherds of the miraculous birth and to follow the star to the place where the Savior lay. The shepherds heeded the angel and went to seek the Christ child.

The star was also seen by three wise men traveling by camels, and they followed it to the stable. They found a baby wrapped

in swaddling clothes laying in a manger. Mary sat close by and Joseph stood beside her, both feeling love in their hearts as they welcomed their son into the world.

The three wise men knelt down before the Christ child and presented Jesus with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The shepherds stood by in silence, filled with wonder and delight.

After leaving the stable, the wise men traveled throughout the land telling people that a baby boy was born and His name was Jesus, Emmanuel (the Son of God).

The true meaning of Christmas is about love, forgiveness, peace on earth, and good will toward all men and women. May we always carry in our hearts the true meaning of Christmas.

Lies They Tell Writers, Part 14: Writing is Easy

By Rod Miller

There's an old saw that says "writing must be fun—if it was work, you'd get paid for it."

As true as that may be—and writing is fun for most of the folks I know who do it—writing well is, at the same time, work. But there are people I know who "write" but are not willing to work at it, or even acknowledge that work is required.

For example(s):

Once, while judging a poetry competition, another of the judges and I were discussing the relative merits of some of the submissions. This judge did not much take into account the use of literary technique, seem to appreciate its value, or want to reward the obvious effort of some of the poets to make their poems poetic. Subject matter and story were the only measures—"poetry" didn't matter. To paraphrase, "I'm a big believer that this stuff comes from God, and all we do is write it down."

Well.

While inspiration is important to writers, it is the Alpha, not the Omega. Once inspired, it is up to the writer to turn that inspiration into poetry (or prose, for that matter). Otherwise, we lay the blame for mediocre or downright bad writing where

it does not belong—in the lap of the Almighty—and relieve the writer of the responsibility. It is our job as writers to take whatever inspiration we receive and mold and shape and polish it into something worthy of the muse.

One more illustration:

From time to time I am approached by writers and poets for advice. (Why they would stoop to my level is beyond my ken.) One poet wanted suggestions on that nasty little thing called meter. In my experience, there are a lot more poets who lay claim to using meter than there are poets who understand and use it properly.

After a few go-rounds of discussion, that poet threw in the towel.

"I really don't want to get too technical if I can help it," came the explanation, "because I think it might take the magic out of the process. Some of what I feel is my best poetry just seems to flow out almost complete."

Well.

Like it or not, using meter properly in poetry is largely a technical process. It takes work and frustration and rewriting and revising and struggle and exertion to get it right. And, when well done, it will add to, not subtract from, the "magic."

Whether it is poetry or prose, fiction or nonfiction, writing well is work. As English novelist Anthony Powell said, "Writing is a combination of intangible creative fantasy and appallingly hard work."

Part of the work is understanding the gritty little details of why you're writing what you're writing the way you're writing it. "Writing is very hard work and knowing what you're doing the whole time," historian Shelby Foote said. I agree.

William Styron said, "Let's face it, writing is hell." He's right, too—even though writing sometimes seems heavenly.

Finally, Thomas Mann made a good point when he said, "A writer is someone for whom writing is more difficult than it is for other people." That may be the difference, right there. Anyone can put words on paper, and many have a knack for putting them down well. But writers—real writers—are the ones who invite, and endure, and even enjoy, the difficulty involved in writing right.

"Lies They Tell Writers, Part 14: Writing is Easy" is the title of a blogpost by Rod Miller. It was published on May 8, 2015 on the author's website, <http://writerrodmler.blogspot.com/2015/04/lies-they-tell-writers-part-13-self.html>.

Writer Rod Miller writes poetry, fiction, and history about the American West and writes online about writing and reading at writerrodmler.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.

Believe In The Magic

Christmas Again 2017

By Larry Stocker

I do not see anything wrong with getting a real live tree and putting it in your house. People should do it more often. At all times of the year. Poinsettias too. Put them in. Decorate! Give presents to all and see that no one is left out. And some of that holiday music is quite nice. Seems to make people reflect on the stages of life they have traveled through.

When I look through those stages that I have traveled through, however, I see a lot of strife. Instantly, I think of my Mom struggling with the Sears and Roebuck Christmas orders, trying to see that each kid in a big Catholic family got something they really wanted plus the clothes and shoes or boots that they really needed.

It was the biggest expenditure of the year for her, right behind Back-to-School time, and she had to balance a lot to get it right. In those days I think I recall looking at one of my Dad's pay stubs from the factory where he worked—sixty-some dollars a week. Not much to work with. But Mom always pulled it off. All the kids ended up with something they really wanted—which is not to say there was not any crying—and proudly carried their new possessions off to their own safe and private places.

My sisters always seemed to want dollies and my brothers (I, no exception) wanted guns and cars, but mostly guns like Paladin, Matt Dillon, Josh Randall or The Rifleman. We would play the theme music from those TV shows with our breath and lips as we used the new toys. Of course, we did not consider those things toys. They were essential enhancements of the illusionary world in which we spent so much time living.

I can't remember Mom and Dad ever getting anything of much importance for Christmas. Seems like Mom would be content with a new scarf with which she could cover her head when she went to Christmas Mass. Maybe Dad would get a new belt. That tells you something right there.

Looking back from now to then, it seems like it was all give, all sacrifice. I wonder if Mom ever thought that maybe some day she would be repaid for all the strife. I don't think she was. The debt is still sitting in the ledger. Being a Mom and a Dad are jobs that defy any kind of pay sched-

ule. Throw the books out the window. She used to talk about the poor house in those days. All the time. Well, Mom kept us one step away from the poor house through the extra-long, extra-cold years that they had in those days.

In our town everybody had Christmas trees that came from the hardware store—but Dad knew the woods. He knew where to find the best trees because he kept his eyes peeled during hunting season. All he had to do was bring the saw and remember where it was.

We always had the very best tree. A kid like me would notice this. We may not have had many things to put under it but we always had the best tree. It was kind of sad in a way, but it was happy too: Dad going out there after work in the dark, dragging the very best tree through the deep snow, then putting it up in the living room and piling all the stuff from Sears and Roebuck underneath it. Not much to it but somehow it was magical.

Our neighbor, who was kinda fat and who had the job of being Santa down at Montgomery Wards, would wear his costume over to our house on Christmas Eve to pass out presents. How the little kids' eyes shined.

Christmas changed through the years. It marked stages and circumstances of life. Not just my life, but everybody's life. During one stage I found myself on Market Street in San Francisco, decades ago, with my two most precious daughters trudging along in the cold on Christmas Eve. Christmas lights, music and decorations all around.

I was newly divorced, trying to find a whole new way of relating to the positive and innocent young girls. I wished for the poverty and the tenuous security of those previous Christmases, but those wishes were too grand to come true.

The three of us walked into a big Macy's store—maybe the biggest department store in San Francisco. Everything in the store was too expensive for me but I emptied my pockets to buy special Christmas jackets for those two precious children, one red and one green. Christmas colors.

During another stage, I found myself in an isolated community of northwest New Mexico called the checkerboard area. The cold wind blew hard and our little family huddled around a pinon tree. There was a little community of friends—Navajo and

Anglo. I was experiencing my first Southwestern Christmas. We were safe and warm, even if a little lonely. Like Christmas always is. A new set of daughters were there opening presents. I had lost track of the first set.

Once I went to Mexico for Christmas. It was Christmas in a very old Mexican hotel. The Mexicans put some kind of soap in a big fountain on the patio to simulate snow. It worked pretty well. Mexicans are great inventors. Soon there was overflowing "snow" and hot Christmas tamales all over the place. I was starting to think that, without ever doing anything intentional, I was getting a chance to participate in some kind of universal Christmas collage.

Now I am in California again. Christmas still saturates the air. The technical side of the marketing is different, I suppose, but the model has not changed much. There is still an underlying force that keeps us buying the same old stuff.

Everyone is still stressed. There is still strife. Over-worked people are running around, decorating, buying stuff and making preparations. Getting boxes delivered to the house. Poverty is not as evident as it used to be for me, but I still feel like everything is hanging by a thread.

"Don't waste too much money on this thing—you don't know what's going to come next." I say that to people. "Hold back," I say to myself. "Please don't buy any presents for me." But they do. They baptise you into the religion without consent. And when you appeal for a fair hearing all you hear is the noise of intense freeway traffic, iPhones, beeping appliances, requests for passwords, loud commuter trains, airplanes and even more traffic. Christmas is mandatory, like standing up for the National Anthem.

In the center of all this I sit with two little girls who know nothing about my irrelevant past Christmases. They listen to me and I listen to them. They are just old enough now to understand that all the decorations are put in front of you for a reason.

They make you think of how nice things could be if you just had more. They make you want everything. And you can't have everything. And if you get one thing, pretty soon you want another. It keeps on going.

We are in a constant cycle of *wanting*. It may as well be learned now because, on *(See Again on page 5)*

Again (cont. from page 4)

this planet, we have to live with this condition of wanting for the rest of our lives.

Of course, these girls get way more than they give. That is—if you are just counting the material things. They are at that stage in life. They draw Christmas trees on their papers in kindergarten and first grade and they talk about the special ornaments they have placed on their drawings.

Mommy let them pick out this current Christmas Tree from a suburban Christmas Tree lot. It cost \$120. That would be equivalent to two weeks of my Dad's pay if he was still working at the same factory, at the same time, which he is not. That is all long gone. Except for a vague green and red memory. Christmas colors.

I have to let it go, just ride along with the holiday season. Listen to the music. Think

of the great stories that come out of strife. I still do not want presents. But I know I can't battle against the current that appears to be stronger than me.

Say Merry Christmas. Say Feliz Navidad. Think warm thoughts. Be cheerful and I hope your Christmas memories are as sweet as mine.

The Gift Ungiven

By Debbie Daybrest

I am a little gift, wrapped so carefully.
I was bought by Mom and Daddy and placed beneath the tree.

Lots of other boxes around, each with a secret wish,
Waiting for that lovely day, a dawn of grateful bliss.

My bow is curly ribbon, my paper hides treasures within.
Longing for the Christmas day, I can't wait to see the grin.

But, alas, I found out just today that the child has gone to heaven.
Taken from this world too soon, tears now stain my satin ribbon.

My paper stays forever untorn, the bow firmly in its place.
I'll never hear the happy squeal or see the shining face.

I was meant to be a token of love, given for the sake of joy.
But now I only mean heartache, a sad and unclaimed toy.

Christmas Day will be spent remembering the child in Heaven.
But as for me I forever remain the Christmas gift ungiven.

The Un-Scrooge-ing of Christmas

By Debbie Daybrest

Years ago, when I was a teen, I was unhappy and thought no one understood me or even cared about me. Christmas was an endless torture—we had very little money, never enough to get my family what, I thought, they wanted.

We scrimped by from paycheck to paycheck. I don't know how my mother could even afford anything for my brother, sister and me. My world was very material and in my depression, I wanted to end my life. That's when I saw that sappy old movie for the first time. *It's A Wonderful Life* saved my life.

I don't remember the circumstances, but I was home by myself and I started to watch that old black-and-white movie. Usually, if it wasn't in color and the newest trend, I wouldn't give it a second thought, but that day I watched it from start to finish.

"Don't you see George, you really had a wonderful life. Wouldn't it be a shame to throw it all away?" That line brought me to tears and I realized then and there that I was loved. Not just by my family but even by my Heavenly Father. I was safe that year.

Time trampled on and the winter depression didn't always go away. I married, our life was a struggle in the early years of our marriage, money was tight, but I appreciated the small gifts that we could give each other.

The depression deepened after our first son was born and, three days later, passed away. It was right after Christmas and for some reason the season became dread-filled. Even after our second son was born, also right after Christmas, I still couldn't bring myself to capture the joy I was supposed to be feeling. I vowed to myself and to all that would hear me that I was a bonified, card-carrying Scrooge. No, not the reformed Scrooge but the one before his transformation. **I Hated Christmas.**

I would put up the tree, do the shopping, bake the cookies, send the cards, do all that was required of me to make the season bright. But deep in my heart I still loathed the holiday. The fuss, the busyness, the bother. **Hum-bug.**

My husband was in the Air Force and was always gone at Christmas. Deployed to some miserable spot on the globe—wherever the trouble in the world would send him—so I had to do Christmas for myself and our son, all by myself. It was then that I noticed that my son was developing the same attitude I had toward Christmas. I knew I had to change for his sake.

I plastered a smile on my face, did things cheerfully and tried to make things better but it still didn't change the deep feelings I harbored. I remember one afternoon I was grouching about something, angry with the world, angry with everyone. I was, to put it mildly, in a rotten mood.

The door bell rang. "Who is it, and what do they want?" I snarled inside. I threw open the door to confront whoever it was that was bothering me and... no one was

there. This only added to my irritation, so I stepped out to snap and snarl my displeasure at being disturbed by this childish prank. I scanned the yard but no one was around, so I started back inside, angrier than ever. That's when I saw it. A box beside the door.

The box was filled with presents. Gifts for my son and me. Books, treats, kindly thought-out offerings of love. I broke. "How could I receive such wonderful treasures after being so horrible? Who thought so much of my son and me that they would take the time to put together this wonderful blessing? Maybe it was friends from church, maybe it was from my husband's squadron."

To this day I still don't know, but I started to rethink my feelings of disdain for a holiday that was meant to be joyful. It was a deep transformation. A letting-go of all the past feelings. I needed to start anew.

Now, in my well-seasoned years, I look at Christmas with a different view. I try to make it a happy time for my grandchildren. Full of wonder, faith, love and warmth. I still get irritated with all the fuss, but I've narrowed down the most important tasks and don't worry if I can't get everything done. It took many years and miracles to change this old Scrooge.

My faith in Christ has replaced the dread and now I can honestly say, with all my heart, Christmas is a joy to me. **Merry Christmas everyone, God bless you.**

Special Section

6 Things Boys Learn By Age 5 That Perpetuate Rape Culture

By Candace Ganger

As the mother of a young boy and a pre-teen girl, I feel the weighted responsibility of teaching both of my children about rape culture. In a world where “boys will be boys” and victims of sexual assault are perpetually blamed for the violence they endured, I know it’s important to facilitate conversations regarding sexual assault and consent immediately, directly, and often.

I think there are things boys learn by age 5 that perpetuate rape culture, too, and I’m doing my best to dismantle them as they come. It’s damn hard when outside forces are dead set on teaching my son otherwise, though, which is why I must remain steadfast in my resolve to raise a son that will dismantle a culture that normalizes systemic sexual violence against women.

My son has always been the literal light of my life. Born a rainbow baby after I endured two pregnancy losses, there hasn’t been a day of his life that I haven’t smiled in extreme gratitude for all he’s given me. My son has provided me with ethereal, unwavering joy, hope, and the chance to be a mother for a second time. But the older he gets, the more pressure I feel to teach him about bodily autonomy and how, when someone says “no” or “stop” it means exactly no and exactly stop.

Every day we go through the rules of consent, and every day it feels like we’re back to square one. It’s not like my son ignores the importance of asking for explicit permission before touching someone because he feels like it, or feels malice toward someone. And our straight-forward conversations get through to some extent.

I know he is a child and he’s learning. But it’s because he’s learning that I need to continue to teach these lessons over, and over, and over again. Because one of my biggest fears is that my son will dismiss the importance of consent when he’s an adult.

As a soon-to-be 6 year old, my son is becoming increasingly curious about bodies—mainly the differences between his and mine. Lately he’s had a fascination with

“smacking” me on the rear, and it has me concerned.

On one hand, he’s barely out of toddlerhood, so he’s exploring boundaries and learning what’s right, what’s wrong, and what he can get away with. On the other hand, he’s violating my consent multiple times a day, harmless though it may be or seem, and by bedtime I’m at a loss as to what else I can possibly do or say to help him understand that touching someone without their permission is not OK.

“In a world where 'boys will be boys' and victims of sexual assault are perpetually blamed for the violence they endured, I know it’s important to facilitate conversations regarding sexual assault and consent immediately, directly, and often.”

The sad truth is that rape culture is everywhere, and probably in my own house, despite my attempts to teach my children otherwise. It makes itself known when I talk to my children about bodies or consent, sex. I feel it when I hear my children discuss what they overhear at home, school, or on television.

My son is young, and I know he means no harm, but if don’t instill in him the need to always seek out consent...? Well, thinking of how he could act in the future is unbearable. I owe it to him, and his sister, to seriously reflect on how the things he’s learned perpetuates rape culture, so I can fix it. Now.

1. Affection Is Mandatory

When we urge our kids to hug a relative, or even us, when they don’t want to, we’re subconsciously teaching them that

their boundaries and personal space mean nothing. I know my son prefers to have his space respected, and it occurred to me recently that imploring him to hug a relative is taking his bodily autonomy away from him

It’s important to teach our kids, and our boys in particular, that hugs and kisses aren’t assumed. Consent is always necessary. The best way to educate our children is through action. We must show our sons what acceptable, respectable behavior looks like, and that means respecting the moments when they don’t want to touch someone, or be touched by someone.

2. Some People “Deserve It”

My kids argue a lot, just like my brother and I did when we were kids. It comes with the sibling territory. But when I blame both children for arguing, trying to figure out who “started it” and who reacted with violence, I mirror a situation in which a victim of sexual assault is blamed for the assault itself. If I dismiss my son’s actions as “boys will be boys,” I fail to hold him accountable for the pain he has caused his sister.

Aggression, in either of my kids, should be dealt with so that it doesn’t manifest into something far more dangerous later on. If I allow my son to blame his sister for triggering his anger, I’m part of the problem.

3. Girls Should Dress With Boys In Mind

My son is always watching and listening. So if my daughter chooses to wear something that is inappropriate for school, because of the established school dress code, I try to tell her privately so I don’t unintentionally shame her in front of my son. If my son notices what his sister is wearing, and says something, it’s important that I intervene and remind everyone involved that it’s her body, her choice.

There’s no denying that school dress codes that disproportionately target girls are problematic. And while I fight to combat the idea that what a female student wears is responsible for the attention span of a male student, I must mirror body positive talk at home.

4. You Pick On The People You Like

When boys bullied me in elementary school, administrators and parents told me it was because they liked me. The idea that *(See Culture on page 7)*

Culture (cont. from page 6)

inappropriate touching or acts of violence is in any way “romantic” perpetuates rape culture, so we must teach our sons that hitting, punching, kicking, yelling, bullying, or anything toxic and abusive isn’t courting. It’s violence.

5. Persistence Pays Off

I loathe the trope about the person who’s eventually “won over” by a romantic interest simply because the person was persistent. In real life, that’s called stalking. That’s called manipulation. That’s called control, and that’s something I do not want my son to do.

My son will learn that no means no, not “keep trying.”

6. Consent Is Evergreen

Giving someone your consent once does not mean that individual automatically has it in the future. Boundaries are confusing when you’re 5, yes, but I need my son to

“The idea that inappropriate touching or acts of violence in any way ‘romantic’ perpetuates rape culture, so we must teach our sons that hitting, punching, kicking, yelling, bullying, or anything toxic and abusive isn’t courting. It’s violence.”

understand that just because his sister let him hug her today, doesn’t mean he can automatically hug her tomorrow.

None of these messages are easy to combat. The fact that I have to continually stop and think about what I’m doing to contribute to my son’s actions, and the outside lessons he has learned, weighs heavily on me. I want my son, and my daughter, to grow up respecting consent and bodily autonomy, not further perpetuating rape culture with words or actions.

And for naught, it ends—and begins—at home.

“6 Things Boys Learn By Age 5 That Perpetuate Rape Culture” is a title of a blogpost by Candace Ganger. It was published on Nov. 12, 2017 on the author’s website, <https://www.romper.com/p/6-things-boys-learn-by-age-5-that-perpetuate-rape-culture-2759765>.

To Guys Who Think It’s “Hard To Be A Man” Right Now, I’ve Got Some News For You

By JR Thorpe

As sexual harassment allegations continue to be made public against powerful men, there has been a theme appearing among male commentators: discomfort. The argument being made—online and IRL—is that it’s “hard to be a man right now,” that men are being forced to reconsider every interaction they’ve had with co-workers, friends, ex-partners, and every other woman they know to see if how they acted could be construed as harassment or inappropriate. Some men are arguing that they now need to approach every interaction with a woman with trepidation; see the “Mike Pence rule” or the “The Rock test.”

I myself have had several conversations like this with men over the past two weeks, both men who identify as feminist allies and ones who don’t. And there’s one aspect that seems to be pretty absent from their consideration: that if you’re feeling vigilant and wary of the opposite sex, and are constantly monitoring your relationships with them in the workplace, on public transport, on the street—you’re getting an insight into what women feel like. All the time. Every day. Yes, the stakes are wildly different—because as worried about their reputations as they may be, men don’t have to worry about their physical safety around women, as women so often do with men—but it’s a badly needed dose of reality.

The atmosphere is indeed a peculiar one. (Though if one more person calls it a “witch hunt” I will scream, because co-opting a historical occurrence that disproportionately, gruesomely punished single women with death as a metaphor for uncovering abuses by powerful men is not acceptable.)

The air seems to vibrate with powerful (and abusive) men’s fear as more allegations are brought into the public eye, and that’s essentially unprecedented. And as new stories come out again and again, I fully encourage men to re-examine themselves and their past behavior. Just like not being racist in a deeply racist world takes work, not being sexist in an environment that normalizes sexist attitudes requires conscious commitment and awareness.

But what you don’t get to do is complain about it—because, congratulations, you are now getting a free sample of how women have to act around men all the time.

In case the flood of experiences shared by the #metoo hashtag didn’t make it clear, women encounter behavior that violates our sexual and personal boundaries constantly. From street harassment to people touching us to unwanted comments to physical violence, women are socialized to constantly be on our guard against these threats. And even if we aren’t experiencing that right now, we’re often, on some level, making plans to counter it if we do.

Women in the modern world have trained, to the point of unconscious reflex, for encounters with potential male threat, discomfort, or annoyance. We carry our keys between our fingers on late nights. We wear headphones with the sound off to hear if we’re being followed. We get into another train car if the closest one is full of drunk men.

We monitor our smiles, arm positions, bodies and words: I don’t want to give him the wrong idea. Please don’t come near me. Please don’t get offended. Please don’t assume that my politeness means I’m flirting. Please regard me professionally. Please leave me alone.

Among men we don’t know or trust (and even among the ones we do), we maintain a watchfulness, embedded in our everyday thoughts. And men who have never had to think about their maleness being a potential live wire in a room might now have a little bit more empathy for women who have to consider it every single day.

The reality, of course, is that men don’t need to feel intensely, fearfully aware of women the way women often have to with men; they just need to, you know, respect women. It’s a hard time to be a man who’s harassed, abused, or assaulted a woman, and it should be. But it’s not a hard time to be a man.

“To Guys Who Think It’s “Hard To Be A Man” Right Now, I’ve Got Some News For You” is a title of a blogpost by JR Thorpe. It was published on Nov. 10, 2017 on the author’s website, <https://www.bustle.com/p/to-guys-who-think-its-hard-to-be-a-man-right-now-ive-got-some-news-for-you-3344482>.

A Little Bit More

Christmas on Galena Street

By T.L. Matt

The walls are made of lathe and plaster
And near the center of the house
A chimney stands, concealed.
To our horror, a fire, so long ago—
Ashes and water spilling out the
gaping hole to the attic.

And yet I have to think and know
That in one hundred and six years
of celebration
There were many little feet that
ran over the rough boards—
Eager to see the tree and
to discover the whistle, the doll
and the orange in the toe of the
stocking.
Eager to feel the warm embrace
of their parents' arms.

There was love, as well as the
fright of sickness and death.
When we leave this home, we pray
That whosoever resides after
us will feel peace, love and hope
Through knowing Him
At Christmastime.

We Come Bearing Gifts

By Rod Miller

The holiday season is upon us, with celebrations of many kinds, from Christmas to Boxing Day to Kwanzaa to Hanukkah to Saturnalia and so on.

While there is much to celebrate and reflect on this season, there is also a crassly commercial aspect to it all—the hectic race to give and receive gifts. My contribution to all the commercialism is the suggestion that there is no finer gift than a good book.

Books have shelf life. The recipient can enjoy it now, and later, and later yet again. Books don't spoil, dry up and blow away, wilt or wither, crash, lose power, fade, or otherwise lose their luster. A good book can bring hours of enjoyment—not only to the owner, but to others it is shared with, as well.

Living a Spiritual Life is to Celebrate Christmas Every Day

By Lorelei Marie

When asked by the publisher of the *Minnekahta Messenger* to write a Christmas story, I decided to write about what the concept of Christmas means to me. In doing so, I would like to include the wisdom of a man named Floyd Looks For Buffalo Hand.*

“Traditional American Indians are raised to respect the Christian Star and the birth of the first Indian Spiritual Leader. He was a Star Person and Avatar. His name was Jesus. He was a Hebrew, a Red Man. He received his education from the wilderness.

“Every day is our Christmas. Every meal is our Christmas. At every meal we take a little portion of the food we are eating, and we offer it to the spirit world on behalf of the four legged, and the winged, and the two legged. We pray—not the way most Christians pray—but we thank the Grandfathers, the Spirit, and the Guardian Angel.

“We are taught as Traditional children that we have abundance. The Creator has given us everything: the water, the air we breathe, the earth as our flesh, and our energy force: our heart. We are thankful every day.

“To the Indian People, Christmas is every day and they don't believe in taking without asking. Herbs are prayed over before being gathered by asking the plant for permission to take some cuttings. An offer of tobacco is made to the plant in gratitude. We do not pull the herb out by its roots, but cut the plant even with the surface of

There are books for every age and every taste, on every subject and for every interest. A good book is engaging and involving, and, by its very nature, interactive. Reading stretches the imagination and grows gray cells. It can be a solitary or a social activity. Using a book requires nothing but light—no batteries, no assembly, no wires, no tools. A book is portable—you can take it with you and use it almost anywhere and everywhere.

As you go down your gift list, consider a book for every name you find.

And, to sum up with a self-serving, greedy, avaricious suggestion, check out the books at www.writerRodMiller.com. Somebody, somewhere, might like one of them.

If not, there are plenty of alternatives. So, by all means, give good books.

the earth, so that another generation will be born in its place.

“It is really important that these ways never be lost. And to this day we feed the elders, we feed the family on Christmas day, we honor Saint Nicholas. We explain to the little children that to receive a gift is to enjoy it, and when the enjoyment is gone, they are to pass it on to another child, so that they, too, can enjoy it.

“Daily living is centered on the spirit of giving and walking the Red Road. Walking the Red Road means making everything you do a spiritual act. It doesn't matter if it is Christmas or not” (<https://www.manataka.org/page1357.html>).

For me, Christmas means living the values expressed by Looks For Buffalo. Not just for one or two days, but “every day.”

Respecting each other and all life, especially our interconnectedness, speaks of the spirit of Christmas. By doing so, we realize the teachings of Jesus, who taught and lived a holistic view of life. We are all a part of the whole, and by living in harmony and balance with all that exists, so may all our relations and Mother Earth be sustained and flourish.

Christmas is thinking, feeling and acting from the heart. Being grateful for the blessings, however small, that may come our way on any given day. And, most importantly, having the opportunity to brighten the days of a fellow traveler in our shared journey by offering a smile, a kind word, a helpful hand or a much-needed gift.

Most of all, Christmas is being with loved ones, sharing happy times and making special memories together. The spirit of Christmas especially finds its value in being with the one with whom you are as one heart. I can't think of any greater gift or blessing at this time and every day.

Let us all share in the spirit of love during this season and carry it forward into the New Year.

Many Blessings and a Merry Christmas to all of my relations, both in the seen and unseen worlds in this great circle of life.

* *Floyd Looks for Buffalo Hand is an Oglala Sioux spiritual interpreter from Pine Ridge, South Dakota. The full-blooded grandson of Chief Red Cloud and a direct descendant of the Crazy Horse Band, he has spent the last 28 years teaching Indian spirituality and spreading the messages of the White Buffalo Calf Lady to all four directions of the world. As a recognized Lakota leader, Looks for Buffalo is often called upon to stand up for the people.*

Andy's Christmas

By Andy Skadberg

Today I am appreciating Christmas, now. As I am surrounded by those I love, both physically, and not—I know the Love that I feel in my heart.

As my children, Shiloh (5) and Lincoln (3) beckon me to get their dolls from being tangled in the bush where they have thrown them, repeatedly, I get to know I'm truly alive.

I am here, only now. This is my Christmas Present! It doesn't come on the 25th of December; until I get there, I'm getting it now. I always have, and always will.

There is nothing missing from Infinite Love. My scientific mind tries to wrap my intelligence around it, but this is not possible. How could all of this be contained and supported by One Breath? I guess this astounding fact is just more evidence of how great God/Love is.

Mostly, I already feel the Christ in me; it's in my heart "all ready." I do not have to yearn for anything else. Since I'm here now, I guess I'll just Share this gift I have been given to the best of my ability.

Thank you for being here to allow me to experience this flow of what we call love.

The River Flows

Each person is where they're at
One needs only to be grateful for that
To leave the role of judge of all that takes place
And enter equanimity
Balance in appreciating this grand melodrama called the "human experience"
All lessons, all challenges, all movement
An expression of grace
Laid out upon the measuring stick called time
Is only a continual flow of "nows"
Experienced within a context created for reference, for interpretation, for Sharing
But the temptation, challenge, opportunity presented in this design
is to reference back to one moment—the present
To finally let go, of resistance of control, of force
And allow the flow of life to fulfill
The direction
Which has always gone on
I was allowed the opportunity to think
And with that came my illusion, of self-control
But the whole time I was
generating my abilities to push
the river
The River Flowed.

I Drove Santa's Sleigh

By John Holmes

I grew up in Montour, which is in the central part of Iowa. It is a town of 350 people with the Chicago/Northwestern railroad going through the center. We lived on what was then a big farm right at the northeastern corner of town.

When I was twelve years old, I was at my friend Joe's house playing in the barn. I discovered there was a like-new, one-horse sleigh in perfect condition there. I had a flea bitten 19-year-old mare that was broken to harness. I asked the family if I could use or have the sleigh since I was the only one in the whole area that had a harness horse.

The house and barn where Joe lived was formerly owned by the town doctor and he probably used the sleigh to make his rounds in the horse-and-buggy days.

I was able to take the sleigh home and thereafter used it to drive around town whenever there was snow.

I liked to take the town kids on rides and then, at Christmastime, I would take Santa around. The little children were very excited to be able to see him in "his" sleigh.

One time I took two of my neighbor kids for a ride and to this day they still tell me how much it meant to them. They became my lifetime friends.

Mele Kalikimaka: Christmas in Hawaii

By Grits McMorrow

The day my parents discovered Waikiki Beach on Oahu in the Hawaiian Islands was when Christmas as I knew it was over.

With hardly any warning, they told my brothers and me that we would not be having our traditional Christmas dinner or attending midnight mass with our grandmother, Arny. Instead, we would be spending Christmas in Hawaii. *So, start packing.*

My parents loved that Christmas trip so much that we spent the next decade or more of Christmas vacations in Hawaii, mostly on Oahu and often at Waikiki Beach. We stayed at several different lodgings until my parents settled on the Halekulani.

It is a multistory hotel now, but when we were there in the '70's and '80's, many of the rooms were in one- and two-family cottage-style buildings surrounded by mown grass, lush vegetation, and fragrant flowers.



Along the sandy shore or on Kalakaua Avenue we could hear the Christmas song, *Mele Kalikimaka*, sung in both the English and Hawaiian languages. Of course, Bing's rendition could be heard wherever a person went in the islands. But after hearing all the other versions, I often wondered if crooner Bing would have had a better sound if he had been strumming a ukelele or at least had Cecelio and Kaponu singing with him.

Family members and friends sometimes joined us for Christmas. My mother's cousin, Lee, from Cape Cod, MA, was always out there—getting a tan and buzzing on Sea Breeze cocktails and pakalolo. My cousin, Phil, came out after graduating from Brown University to seek the best surfing breaks. He found an even greater prize—a beautiful wife and mother of their two (now grown-up) children. My youngest brother brought his friends, Jimmy Cross and James Bradshaw, to join us in our board and body surfing, snorkeling, and swimming adventures.

Each year on Christmas Eve, with the sun still shining, Santa arrived at Waikiki Beach in an outrigger canoe paddled by his elves. He stepped onto the sand at the Halekulani and handed out treats from his bag of goodies to delighted children of all ages.

My parents passed away in the '90's and their ashes were taken to Oahu and scattered in the water they loved to swim in. Now, whenever I think of Christmas Past, I remember the familial joy of Christmases spent with my parents in Waikiki Beach.

Rhyme Or Reason

Circus Dreams

By Carrie Cofer

Stretch sits at the winter window
Wishing, wanting, waiting
Tail a-twitch, toenails testing traction.
Step – hesitate – step – pause,
Wary doe stares in at him.
Stretch prays passionately,
“O Queen Bast! Give me the huge mousie!”

His cinnamon eyes are all squinched,
Stretch would call them “focused”,
his hips swing free, all positioned to strike,
when HARK! He hears what no one else can.
Wild turkeys on parade past the back door,
searching the pine needles for Bur Oak acorns.

Stretch thunders down the hall on quiet cat’s feet,
across the bedroom, onto the dresser,
and slams – BANG – into the window, falls to the floor
still muttering and chattering his teeth from the adrenaline.

Black panther wakes, stretches, blinks golden eyes.
He wonders why he has a headache, and why
his mouth tastes of feathers. We’ll never tell.



Life on the Rio Grande

By Larry Stocker

Late July along the banks of the Rio Grande we are still lucky to have water. Fewer birds, wide and powerful skies and fast flowing water.

At this point in the year, the gnats seem to be trying to make up for the lack of birds. Birds, normally, don’t fly into your eyes and nose and mouth while your hands are busy playing a guitar—but gnats do. It can make it hard to get through a whole song, but it’s worth it if you can.

Last night the sound carried well in the still warm air. It was like playing in a natural auditorium. Energetic kids played in the happy waters of the river without any awareness of time until the colors of the sky changed from light to dark. They, without listening to the song, barely realized that they were part of it.

Controversy sticks out in unexpected places. Sometimes it seems so easy to run

up against someone’s philosophical views of how things are. A while ago I wrote a song called “About Angels,” a song I figured was simple and straightforward enough, harmless, maybe even cute.

I had read somewhere the optimistic news that for each person in the world there is, on average, three angels to hover, float around and to assist in the completion of each individual’s progression through this wearisome land; that those angels occasionally intervene in subtle ways in people’s lives whether they are religious or not.

It sounded like a delightful concept to me. Little did I realize how vehemently some smart scientific folks would deny that whimsical idea!

An old friend, reported a story like that yesterday as we sat in the natural auditorium along the river. It wasn’t a sad report, just curious and interesting. I guess you can take almost anything and use it as evidence for or against something.

Didn’t stop the river from flowing, however, or the kids from playing in the cur-

Old Houses

By Judy Kay Freeman Perrigo

When I’m going down the highway, I see houses that have withstood the years of wars with Indians, of soldiers coming home and peaceful times of raising children.

Sometimes I wonder, what would they say? What would they tell us about the heartache, the pain, the loss of loved ones? What would they say about the joining of two lives as one, or a birth of a child?

What glorious stories they could tell. What mysterious tales they might relate. What beautiful memories, both sad and happy, they could share with us.

The homes are abandoned now—to let the weather and the years take their toll. They sit in solemn silence, watching the world go by. Their doorsteps waiting for the time when someone will come along and fix the “Old Place” up. Or waiting for the final blow of a strong wind to bring down the walls. In my family’s past, sadly marking time as the “Old Freeman Place.”

The people are gone now—they’ve moved away, leaving behind memories to fill the empty halls and rooms with haunting sounds of children’s laughter or the smell of a home-cooked meal. There are no more family, friends, or mornings and love.

If they could only talk. They would give us more meaning to our lives and our past—these old houses that we pass.

rent, or the gnats trying to enter my deepest recesses by traveling through my nose.

Didn’t stop the sun from departing behind an orange semicircle or the clouds from changing the texture of the auditorium ceiling and it didn’t stop the air from changing from light to dark.

Soon it was time to go. I put two of the wet kids into the van and drove them back to where their comfortable beds were. Maybe, when they went to sleep, they dreamed about angels. The land of dreams is the natural territory of angels.

“Life on the Rio Grande” is a weekly email blog written by Larry Stocker. This story was published on Jul. 25, 2014.

Well, If You Ask Us

Lapping the Hands that Feed Me

By Grits McMorrow

It is with pride that Terry and I join all the contributing writers and poets in presenting this Christmas Issue to our readers. We hope you will enjoy sitting down with a cup of hot coffee and a slice of pie and reading the wide variety of interesting and entertaining stories and poems written by our team of gifted contributors. Twenty-five submissions—I'm pretty sure that's a record.

But we're not focused on setting records with the *Minnekahta Messenger*. We just want to put out a publication that people like to read. And to do that, we need stories and poems... *Lots of them.*

Back when I was starting up this project, I had met quite a number of people and talked on the phone with a few others who liked the idea of contributing their essays, poems, and prose to a new publication. Shortly after the launch of the paper, the newly-elected Hot Springs mayor asked me, "What is the purpose of the paper?" I replied, "It is a vehicle to allow writers to express themselves."

And have they ever. Since our very first issue, the *Messenger* has been host to some truly great material by skilled writers. Who could forget those three articles written by John MacDonald and Lorelei Marie that appeared in the Special Section of the April Fool's Day Issue? Or the sets of stories by Robert Horse and Lorelei Marie in the Mitakuye Oyasin section describing the plight of Indigenous youth and Native peoples throughout America? What about the many amusing tales by Larry Stocker of traveling on "chicken buses" in Nicaragua or of playing guitar along the banks of the Rio Grande in New Mexico? And the "Lies They Tell Writers" series by Rod Miller? And can you remember all those poems by Carrie Cofer, Andy Skadberg, G. Douglas Jackson, Michael Neuertz, and Debbie Daybrest? How about the words penned by D.E. and T.L. Matt? Or Lorelei Marie? Andy Skadberg? Dan Davison? Barbara Hauseman? Or by all the guest contributors (Frank Gregg, Dusty Pence, Shirley Schumacher, Paul Nabholz, Mark Hollenbeck, Rowena Richardson, Mary Helen Pederson, Alex Hayworth, Chad Nováček, Ricardo Jacome, Scot Free)? Or by the new local writers (Judy Kay Freeman Perrigo, Loni Manning, John Holmes)?

I wish to thank all of the above-named writers and poets for their generous contributions to feed the literary appetites of our readers and furthering the success of the *Minnekahta Messenger*.

Social Security 2018

By T.L. Matt

How long has it been since seniors have seen an increase in Social Security checks? There was a 3.5% increase in 2012. That's a long time ago. Our announced 2% increase in 2018 may not be of much benefit, however.

Social Security COLAs (cost-of-living adjustments) are determined by inflation. As the costs of good and services increase, the idea is that Social Security benefits increase by the same percentage so that seniors are able to maintain their purchasing power.

These COLAs are based on the CPI-W (Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers). This tracks the prices of certain items seen to be representative of working households. Unbelievably, the CPI-E (Consumer Price Index for Elders) is not used for Social Security COLA. Seniors spend twice as much on medical care and this has been increasing, and many experts believe that seniors are losing purchasing power slowly, despite the intentions of the sometimes annual adjustments.

If you are a careful shopper, you have noted in the past years that items you normally purchase have increased in price by up to a third in some cases. It is a sneaky process, and increase is added gradually so you don't really notice. Like the "frog in the boiling pot" tale.

Also, there is a good chance that most, if not all, of the 2% increase could be swallowed up by increasing Medicare Part B premiums (<https://www.fool.com/retirement/2017/11/02/social-security-checks-are-rising-for-218-but-sen.aspx>).

Nancy Altman, president of Social Security Works, says, "It's long past time for Congress to update the formula used to calculate the yearly COLAs so that it reflects the real expenses that seniors and Americans with disabilities face every day."

In its 2017 annual report, Social Security trustees again warned that without changes, the Social Security trust fund would be depleted by 2034 (<https://www.aarp.org/retirement/social-security//info-217/new-cola-benefits-2018-fd.html>).

If we care about our loved ones, we will urge our Congressional representatives to address these issues. It's not just about us. We can stretch that pound of turkey burger to three meals instead of two. But what about them?

Minnekahta Messenger

Published by Minnekahta Publishing, LLC

P. O. Box 221 Hot Springs, SD 57747 • messenger@blackhillssentinel.com

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Home (cont. from front cover)

warning signs they placed—the night before they plowed—so you could move your car.

One time I was sick for several days and didn't make it up to Addie to move our van. On the day I felt well enough to go shopping, I was shocked! *No vehicle.* In a blizzard, I fought wind and snow to trudge about a mile to the garage where they had towed it. I burst into the door in tears, explaining the situation, and they had pity and reduced the high towing fee... somewhat.

It was a real adventure negotiating narrow West Addie street to the bottom of the hill, especially with cars parked on one side during the winter months. Every day I said a prodigious amount of prayers as I made my way to the Hearst Library in Lead where I worked. Such extremely steep roads are not for the faint-hearted.

Because some residents fed the deer that roamed around the town, that naturally attracted mountain lions. One morning after an unusually heavy snow, I saw a couple of huge paw prints with the indentation of tail behind, in the snow. The lion had jumped over an eight-foot fence in one bound and proceeded to leap over the neighboring fence. Our little Spunky would have made a tasty snack for that cat.

It was, however, a treat to live there because of the very distinctive homes. We used to take hikes around the town, marveling at the ingenuity of the construction on the slopes of the mountains.

The parks at the higher elevations were welcome areas. There were sometimes great steps that led to nowhere, the houses gone. The Adams Museum was always a great place to take visitors, as well as the Mining Museum and the awesome Open Cut.

One of the most uplifting things about Lead were the cotillion chimes that made magical music several times a day. Sitting on our deck, we felt the wonderful effect seem to transform our world.

Sound really travels in the valley. When we came home at night and shut the van doors, dogs across the one-and-a-half-mile-wide valley would bark at the sound. Because of this aural phenomenon, we could also faintly

hear concerts from Deadwood, which was a few miles away.

We often attended concerts that took place at the historic Homestake Opera House. I was so grateful to Phoebe Hearst, the philanthropist who was concerned with the welfare of the miners and their families.

She funded the building of the Opera House and Recreation Building. At the time we lived in Lead, the renovation was in its early stages. There had been a fire in 1984 that had damaged the ornate place. Still, there was always something special going on there during the holidays.

The ambience of the home made our Christmas celebrations special. I could envision the families that had lived there over the years and wrote a poem about that subject (*See "Christmas on Galena Street" on page 8*).

At Christmas, I carried on the tradition of reading *The Legend of the Christmas Spider* to our grandchildren. I had previously hidden a small construction paper spider inside the tree. There was a little prize for the lucky child who located it.

As a reference to the past and this beautiful story, I want to share with you a folk legend from Germany and the Ukraine that I have adapted in hopes it will charm you as it charms me and my grandchildren.

The Legend of the Christmas Spider

Once upon a time, long ago, a gentle mother was busily cleaning the house for the most wonderful day of the year—the day they would celebrate Christ's birth.

Not a speck of dust was left. Even the spiders had been banished from their cozy corner in the ceiling to avoid the housewife's busy cleaning. They finally fled to the farthest corner of the attic.

It was Christmas Eve at last! The tree was decorated and waiting for the children to see it. But the poor spiders were frantic, for they couldn't see the tree. Silently, they crept out of the attic, down the stairs and across the floor to wait in the crack in the threshold.

Suddenly, the door opened a wee bit and quickly the spiders scurried into the room. They crept all over every branch and twig and saw every one of the pretty things. At last, they satisfied themselves completely of the Christmas tree's beauty.

But alas! Everywhere they went they had left their webs. The guardian angel of the house saw the tree and was dismayed. He loved the little spiders, for they were God's creatures too, but he knew the mother who had trimmed the tree for the children, wouldn't feel the same, so he touched the webs and they all turned to sparkling, shimmering silver and gold!

Ever since that time, people have hung tinsel on Christmas trees and, according to the legend, it has been a custom to include a spider among the decorations on the tree.

I hope everyone will have a memorable and reflective Christmas and include traditions with their loved ones that will stand the tests of time and uplift all generations.

I also hope that every home will have a guardian angel!

Cravings (cont. from front cover)

From a biological and evolutionary perspective, the most sustainable form of energy for your brain and body is healthy fats—not sugar.

Giving our bodies fat instead of sugar to burn, the ketogenic diet has been shown to do some remarkable things for our brain and metabolic health. But even if you're not going full keto (and I'm not going to blame you for that, especially during the holidays), eating high-fat foods can help with satiation and satisfaction, making you full and happy enough to say no to any holiday treat.

Fat bombs use healthy fats like:

- Coconut oil
- Coconut cream
- MCT oil
- Avocado oil
- Nut butters and oil
- Grass-fed ghee or butter

So before you go to the next ugly-Christmas-sweater party, come prepared. Skip the cookie table and drop a F(at) bomb.

Below are my favorite holiday-flavored fat bombs.

Cocoa Almond Butter Fat Bombs

Ingredients

- ¼ cup virgin coconut oil
- ¼ cup almond butter
- 1 ounce unsweetened baking chocolate

- 1 tablespoon cocoa
- ½ teaspoon stevia drops

Method

1. On low heat, melt the ingredients, stirring continuously so as to not burn. Alternatively, you can use a chocolate melter or double boiler.

2. Pour into silicone molds. You can use holiday shapes like snowmen, snowflakes, candy canes, or Christmas trees.

3. Freeze until they harden.

4. Remove from silicone molds.

5. Store in the freezer in a sealed container.

Coconut Lemon Fat Bombs

Ingredients

- ½ cup virgin coconut oil
- ½ cup coconut butter
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- ½ teaspoon stevia drops

Method

1. On low heat, melt the ingredients, stirring continuously so as to not burn. Alternatively, you can use a chocolate melter or double boiler.

2. Pour into silicone molds. You can use holiday shapes like snowmen, snowflakes, candy canes, or Christmas trees.

3. Freeze until they harden.

4. Remove from silicone molds.

5. Store in the freezer in a sealed container.

"Stop Holiday Sugar Cravings In Their Tracks With This One Food" is the title of a blogpost by William Cole, D.C. It was published on Dec. 13, 2017 on the author's website, <https://drwillcole.com/stop-holiday-sugar-cravings-with-this-one-food/>.

Dr. Will Cole is a leading functional medicine expert who specializes in clinically investigating underlying factors and customizing health programs for chronic conditions such as thyroid issues, autoimmune, hormonal dysfunctions, digestive disorders, diabetes, heart disease and fibromyalgia. Visit www.drwillcole.com for free e-books, recipes, and webcam evaluations.