

Just Ramblin'



*by
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In Remembrance of my Mom
Ed Gerken 12/20/2015

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A Compilation of Columns
published in the *Hill City Prevailor*

by Georgia Gerken

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INTRODUCTION

Since late 1995, I have had a column more or less on a regular basis in the *Hill City Prevailor*. Several people have commented that they enjoy reading this column, so I thought I would gather together these ramblings and see if it would make an interesting booklet. We begin with the very first column, published in December of 1995.

December 13, 1995

The Beginning

I am calling this column “In The Interim” as the definition of interim is “in the time intervening”. And that is about what I am for a week or two here at the Hill City Prevailor — just filling in the intervening time until Pat Lembke returns to the office. Pat has had surgery on her shoulder and we are all wishing her a speedy recovery.

Editor Wishbone (his mother still calls him Don) has been a very patient teacher on this confusing computer. I think my new name is going to be “Whoops” as I seem to say that an awful lot as this infernal machine does things I have no idea it is doing, and then won’t do things I want it to. Perhaps by the time Pat gets back I may be able to figure it all out?

I heard that an old newspaper friend up in the north part of South Dakota in the little burg of McIntosh is also trying to pull himself into the computer world. Merle, lots of luck.

Mayor Drue appointed me to be on the Cemetery Council and we have had some interesting meetings. Pat, you have to get back as you were the one who got it going. It was really good of LeRoy Kindler to come all the way from Newell for our meeting this week. He and his family hope to have an archway built at the entrance as a memorial to their folks. LeRoy and Annette Straw Groves had some good reminiscences of high school days. Perhaps there are others in the community or who have family buried in the cemetery here who would like to have a memorial also. Let one of us on the council know.

Speaking of the cemetery, what a shame the “joy riders” choose to do their demolition there!

It is a good feeling to be in a newspaper office again after many years - tho my oh my, how it has changed. They don’t even have a regular typewriter any more. Everything is done on this one little machine.

Have any of you ever wondered how the Prevailor got its name? A quote from William Faulkner: “I believe that man will not merely endure; he will prevail.” And Prevail, it has!

December 20, 1995

Christmas in Aberdeen in the ‘30’s

While the children are all excited about Christmas Present — and Christmas presents! — we older folks remember Christmases Past. So as not to embarrass my children, I will in this column remember Christmases from my own childhood.

I grew up in Aberdeen, and Christmas time in the 1930’s meant cold weather. My sister and I still like to talk about snow and cold being “squeaky” cold. That is when your shoes make that kind of “squeak” as you walk. Tho I’ve noticed that with our snowboots, it is not near as satisfying as with regular shoes. Of course there were no malls at that time, so all shopping from store to store was outside — in the squeaky cold. Maybe that is why I still like winter in South Dakota.

My dad was the one in our family who really liked Christmas. Well, actually, Dad liked ALL holidays and birthdays, but I think Christmas was his favorite. He would shop and shop for weeks trying to find the right present for each of us kids, and yet I can’t remember hardly a year when he wouldn’t jump up during gift-opening time, run upstairs and bring down something he had forgotten to wrap.

Dad was superintendent of the Sunday school and the Christmas program was always Christmas Eve. We would drive to the church in our Model A, he would let my mother and me out and go park the car. We would always have to sit alone as he was busy seeing that everything went okay. My brothers and sister played in the Sunday school orchestra; my dad usually played a harmonica solo; there was the usual Christmas play, and of course, Santa came with bags of candy.

When we got back to our house, Santa had also had time to drop off a few presents for me there. We also opened gifts from my mother's sister then and Mother would always feel bad because she couldn't afford to send as expensive gifts as we received. Family gifts were opened in the morning.

Christmas was always a happy time until the war years. During those years, we went through the motions, out of habit, but it wasn't the same without my brothers and my sister's husband there.

After I married and had my own family, I tried to keep as many of my family Christmas traditions alive as I could. One of the ornaments that went on all of our Christmas trees was a little Santa in a dirigible that had been on my parents' first tree and on all of our Aberdeen Christmas trees.

I hope all the readers of the Prevailer have as many happy memories of Christmas as I have. And may you all have a very wonderful Christmas this year!

December 27, 1995

New Street Lights in Hill City (and other things)

Wow! Were you one of the fortunate ones to see Main Street last Thursday evening when the new antique street lights went on for the first time? And the snow was falling in soft, fluffy flakes? The lights made the snow sparkle and it was just like a Christmas card, so pretty.

Now that the street-road-lights project is going into the last stages of the finishing work, I think that Mayor Vitter and the City Council should be commended for persevering and working so hard to see this project through to its fruition. Special applause and thanks should go to Art Anderson for his great job of supervising. That little red truck was here, there, and everywhere.

I must admit that I was one who was a doubter. I did not think tearing up the roads was a good idea; just leave us alone. But it has turned out beautifully and, when you really think about it, it is a very good idea to get all that old water and sewer pipe out and put in new. Thanks to all who worked on the project. It has really transformed Hill City.

Another thanks, in a different vein, should go to Danny Bergin. In another article in the paper is a thank you from the Senior Citizens Board, and I would like to add my thanks to that. Writing a column every week is not easy, especially when you have dozens of other things you would like to do. And when you are a volunteer, it is even more commendable. We all miss your columns, Danny, but can understand how you want a break.

I don't mean to single out Danny in the column-writing department. Thanks goes to all the others who contribute their time and talent to the newspaper. We all enjoy your efforts.

While in the thanking frame of mind, we want to thank everyone who was concerned about the disappearance of Sandy and Ed's dog Yogi. Several called with

“sightings”, but the big thank you goes to Vic Alexander and son Jason who, with the help of Dwayne Holzworth, corraled Yogi and took him home to a very grateful Sandy. What a nice Christmas present.

And then there always seems to be a “Grinch” — like the one who vandalized the Coke machine at the Merc on Saturday night. Not nice!!!

But, to end this column on something that is nice, the Rapid City Journal featured an article on State Auditor Vern Larson’s Christmas card. Vern, who at one time was an English teacher in the Hill City schools, has, for the past two years, had a contest in the elementary schools around the state and has chosen his Christmas card from the winning entries. (And at his own expense, not the state’s.) Way to go, Vern!

Pat Report: Talked to Pat Lembke this morning and she is progressing with her shoulder — has some movement, the staples have been out for a couple weeks and the tape came off last week. She is doing her exercises faithfully. Will have to see what the doctor says next week. Pat did say that the Christmas decorations on the houses along Deerfield Road have been beautiful. Everyone did a wonderful job....And everyone has decorated really nice here in town, too. Looks so nice, maybe we should just keep the lights on all year? (The electric companies would like that.)

January 3, 1996

Remembering Hill City in 1960’s

Last week I mentioned how the new roads have transformed Hill City. Come back with me about 35 years when my family and I first came to the area and reminisce a bit. We had a cabin up Reno Gulch and were “summer people” for about ten years before moving out here permanently.

When we came out each summer, first we’d stop at Bud Belmont’s Mobil station to fill up with both gas and news about what had been going on over the winter months. The Belmonts were our neighbors and friends. It was interesting over the years to see the girls grow up and start working in the station—each running out with their stool so they could reach the windshield to wash it. Your car got really good full-service at Bud’s Mobil.

Then, we’d stock up on groceries at the Corner Market. I think Marion Cramer was the owner then. After some years, Harold Maudlin took over and we got the same good buys from him. And good buys and good news we always got at the A&H Grocery from Arleen Lippman. The lady with the fabulous memory for names! Year after year, as soon as we walked in the store, Arleen would call out a greeting and introduce us, kids and all, to whomever happened to be in the store. She knew their names, too, whether they were locals or tourists there for the first time.

Lefty Spiers helped many a time out at the cabin. We had a little five gallon water heater that he helped install when I threatened to hitch-hike back to Sioux Falls if I couldn’t have hot water. I don’t mind “roughing it” as long as I can sleep in a real bed and have hot and cold running water.

For relaxation, we’d leave the kids off at The Gem Theater and then go across the street to Glen’s Tavern for a beer. It was kind of dark inside and quiet, and there was a wood stove to keep it warm on a chilly evening. Another Glenn bought out Glen Rice. Glenn VanOrsdall, better known as Grandpa Van, turned the place into the well-known Lit’l Nashville — and then came Mike Colvin and then John Novy

and others, until we have the complete transformation into Jon Crane's beautiful gallery. You sure would never have dreamed of that change on a country-western Sunday afternoon with Grandpa Van strumming his banjo.

The bank was where Bob Harnack now has his Trading Post. And Ernie Engle had a drug store where he had his own brand of cough syrup that sure cleared up the kids' coughs.

Church on Sunday morning was at the very crowded, standing room only, little Catholic church, where Bruce Babcock always had a friendly greeting for us. The organ that was in that little church was purchased by us, for a donation, when the new church was built. Our good friend Larry Dowd helped dismantle it, piece by piece, and then reassemble it in our Reno Gulch cabin. Good sing-alongs whenever anyone came who knew how to play it. It was later sold to the Chute Roosters; then was on loan to Dianne Murray's museum, and is now on display at the Chute—way up high where no one can harm it.

Those were really happy summers, but I'm afraid that the winters then, for the local merchants, were even more quiet than they are now. Let's hope that the new roads, with the up-graded shopping area, will help all the people of the area have more profitable winter months. And, you know, this can only happen if we all — and this is a favorite maxim of mine — Shop Locally!

Pat Report: Pat was in the office last week Thursday and her arm is improving tremendously. She is to go to the doctor this week to see when she comes back to work.

As I said when I first called this column "In The Interim", it is just to fill in until the real Office Manager returns. It has been fun working on a newspaper again — and, I must say, a lot easier than when I did it 20 years ago! This time, I have none of the responsibility—which is how it should be for retired folks, especially retired moms. Don has been very patient with his mother and I have even gotten so I enjoy the computer, and appreciate even more what "Wishbone" does here at the Prevailer. I still don't understand everything about computers, in fact very little, but I can sure see the potential and why they are taking over everything.

Another note to my friend Merle in McIntosh. I guess you'd better put your linotype in the museum, Merle. The computer is here to stay.

January 10, 1996 Looking Forward

Surprise! I'm still here. Will give the "Pat Report" first as that determines how long I will be doing this job — and this column. Pat went to the doctor last week, feeling quite chipper and expecting to get the word that she could come back to work. Wrong! The doctor said she is doing too much too soon and must slow down or the surgery will be damaged. So that means at least a couple more weeks of therapy and (restless) rest for Pat and more computer time for me.

So, to continue with "The Interim". Enough of looking back, let's look forward this week. All the New Year's resolutions by Mrs. Shuck's and Mrs. Williamson's second graders made me realize how much the children are into environmental issues. So many of them said they want to keep the garbage (or trash) picked up, want to keep things clean around their homes. That is a very good resolution, and one we all can adhere to. It doesn't take much effort to pick up the trash around our homes,

to put things away when they are not being used. It makes a lot of difference in the way a neighborhood looks, the impression that is given to visitors, and even in how we feel about ourselves.

With all the new businesses in town, I think we have a great summer season ahead of us. The Double D, Spring Creek Traders, and Jon Crane have already gone through one summer and have really entered into the spirit of the town. Both Eldon and Neal were really working at the Kris Kringle affair. Crane's Gallery had a booth and has been active in donations to several events. The Dairy Queen is also going into its second year. Mike Colvin's new building should add a lot to Main Street. It's pretty impressive. And then we have Bev Pechan and Ramona Van Horn with new shops, and Bill Butterfield as a new business operator. The summer season is looking good...and it's only January!

I forgot to put a notice in last week's Prevailier about the cemetery meeting this week, so hope everyone will remember and come tomorrow evening, January 11. Pat said she would call to remind members. It is not a closed meeting, by the way. Anyone with input is welcome.

Another meeting that I am sure will be interesting to the Friends of the Library. Jon Crane has invited us to meet in his gallery and he will visit with us about his paintings. Sounds exciting! A change of pace always livens things up and promotes interest. Hope to see a lot of folks come Wednesday morning, the 17th of January.

Don't know about you, but it is always kind of a relief to me to get the holiday season behind me. While it is a joyous time of year, and we all have a good time visiting friends and relatives, it is good to get "on with our lives", to get in a routine again. Is this just me, or do others feel the same?

To all the readers of the Prevailier, hope 1996 is a good one. If that mess in Washington could get straightened out, it would help a lot. Do you suppose those congressmen realize how many people are affected? I notice by Friday's Journal that our South Dakota representatives do care. Both Tim Johnson and Larry Pressler have put their salaries aside until the "regular" people are being paid again. Any so-called savings that may come out of negotiations will be spent trying to get the country operating again. Oh my.

Oh, almost forgot — Welcome Terry Holub to the Pennington County Courant in Wall. Terry started here in Hill City several years ago; perhaps some of you remember him. He is now editor of the Wall newspaper. Must have been the good training he got here at the Prevailier.

January 17, 1996 **My Pen Pal Bet Peters**

My Friend Bet.....

Many of my Hill City friends often hear me talk of my Pen Pal friend in England. Her name is Bet Peters and we have been corresponding since 1973. That is quite a long time. Although we have exchanged photos of ourselves and our families, I doubt if we'll ever meet in person — unless one of us wins the Lottery!

Our friendship began when two of the Peters' sons came to the Black Hills as part of a student tour of America led by Dennis Morison, a teacher from Maidstone, County of Kent, in England. While the tour covered a great part of the United States,

the group seemed to like the Black Hills the best and would stay at the campground in Gordon Gulch near Hill City for a week or so.

The managing editor of *The Prevailer* at that time was Paddy Ingvalson who reveled in human interest stories. So, Paddy took his trusty camera and ever-present notebook and visited the English teacher and his lads. The story and accompanying picture were duly printed in the paper. When the group returned to England, Mrs. Peters (Bet) wrote asking if she could have a print of the picture. Always accommodating, we sent the picture with our regards. Then, back came a thank you letter — and so our relationship was begun.

Over the ensuing years, Bet and I have exchanged more than just notes and pictures. She has been most generous in sending mementoes of English history, the Silver Anniversary of Queen Elizabeth, books and papers relating to WWII — through which her survival was much more notable than my own — and just letters of friendship. Bet and her family have been very interested in the Black Hills Institute, its fossils, and its case with the government.

It has been fun; it has been educational; it has been heartwarming. I certainly cherish her across-the-seas friendship very much.

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Our Hill City Slickers did a commendable job at the Dahl Center on Saturday evening. Mike Reardon of BackRoom Productions which sponsored the evening, said it was the largest crowd ever to attend one of their productions. A goodly portion of that crowd came from Hill City to hear the home-town boys. Good concert, good crowd, good publicity for the talent we have in Hill City.

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This is a subject which has bothered me for some time. I mentioned it to Mayor Vitter last week and will also mention it here. We have, in the past, had campaigns for business places to display the United States flag. That is very commendable; however, I hate to see it used as just a decoration which, once put up, is never taken care of after that. When a flag gets faded and ragged, it is a disgrace. If you display the flag, take care of it.

January 24, 1996 The Polka-Dot Biffy

You've heard of the polka-dot bikini — but have you heard of the yellow polka-dot biffy? I know Floyd Reed in Rochford has; right, Floyd?

When we first got our cabin in Reno Gulch the biffy (out-house) was pretty gross and my “city” family (me included) had many qualms about using it. You can only hold your breath so long. So Jack undertook to build a new one. Being a farm boy, he knew how.

The new hole was dug and he got lumber from the old Hill City Lumber Yard — where Dakota Stone used to be and the new highway is now. The length of the boards was 8 feet and he neglected to cut them off, so it was a pretty imposing structure, even taking into account that part of the boards went into the ground.

The interior decorating included a fancy framed picture and a chandelier — to bring the height down — which we got from Bill Provine's second-hand store, a phone which was connected to the main cabin, a rug and a broom. Oh, yes, we had to have an “up town” toilet seat, too.

Daughter Lou and I were commissioned to paint the exterior. We went in to Barney Perli's Gamble Store and he recommended making it a "good Gambles' green". Well, Gambles' green is nice, but not exciting. So, Lou and I took various sized tin cans, drew circles all over the building as far up as we could reach, and painted the circles a bright yellow. Now it was exciting!

The aforementioned Mr. Reed was a friend of ours from the Gregory area and he would bring car loads of visitors out to see the Polka-Dot Biffy at the Gerken cabin. That's all they would do — get out of the car, go see the biffy, back in the car and drive off. Much fun!

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Was very sorry to have to cancel the Friends of the Library meeting at Jon Crane's last week. Had so looked forward to meeting there. After several days of nice, nice weather, the storm hit on Wednesday morning and it just was more prudent for everyone to stay home.

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Ceal Morehouse will be having her 90th birthday on February 7. Would be nice if her Hill City friends could remember her with a card shower. Her address is: Cecelia Morehouse, 918 12th St., Rawlins, WY 82301. Happy Birthday, Ceal!

March 6, 1996
McGovern in the Black Hills

I received so many nice comments on my recent columns written when I was substituting for Pat that I thought I would submit an occasional column to the Prevailor, the frequency depending on when I can think of something to write about.

The topic to write about currently seems to be politics. It is in all the newspapers, magazines, on TV and radio. So I will add my bit to the subject, even though there is some question if it is really very political in nature. I entitle it, The Day Presidential Candidate McGovern Came To Hill City.

It was about mid-July in 1972 and George McGovern had just been made the Democratic party's candidate for president. He was planning to take a little "R & R" in the Black Hills and had a cabin reserved at Sylvan Lake. Local folks found out that the cavalcade's route would come through Hill City and began planning an old-fashioned South Dakota welcome.

A huge banner was painted and strung across Main Street and many placards were hand-printed. Every sheet of poster board in stock at the Prevailor Office was used. Everything was ready, including a large crowd of enthusiastic (albeit mostly Republican) Hill Citizens.

And then, only about half an hour before McGovern was due to arrive, a large semi-truck came roaring through town, hooked on to the banner (which, unfortunately, had not been strung high enough), and not only tore down the banner but also the pole it was tied to and broke the light! Gene Barker, who at that time was the Black Hills Power and Light man in Hill City, worked frantically and got the pole and wires off the highway.

Then the shouts of "Here they come!" But lo and behold, the exhausted candidate was sound asleep and saw nothing of the welcome planned for him! Luckily, someone on his staff was awake and word got to McGovern about the disappointed people in Hill City. More formal plans were then made for him to return the next day,

after he had gotten a good night's rest in the beautiful Black Hills, and make an appearance. Jack Gerken, publisher of *The Prevailer* and head of the Pennington County Republicans, organized the welcome for the newly designated Democratic candidate. The Forest Service (thanks to Dave Morin) furnished a flat-bed truck which was the speaker's platform. Gene Barker was present again, this time as president of the City Council; Windy McCain was also on the platform as president of the Chamber of Commerce; and Rosie Johnston represented the Chamber also. Stan Eng presented McGovern with one of his sculptures as a gift from the town. A crowd of around 500 people listened to McGovern's first speech of his presidential campaign.

While the entourage of media accompanying a candidate was not as large as it is nowadays, it was pretty large by Hill City standards. Not only were there lots of security people but also some nationally known news people. Also, in 1972, the media did not have such ready access to their home stations; and so the tiny *Hill City Prevailer* office (which was then housed in the building now occupied by Just Dandy) became the outlet for the national media. The *Prevailer's* bathroom (really tiny) became their darkroom and photos were sent by the UPI over the *Prevailer's* phone. I was typist at that time and would have to stop typing as the movement of the typewriter (I was so speedy!) jarred the phone and hindered the transmission of their pictures. Haven't communications come a long way in 20 years!

March 27, 1996 The Gloop Maker

I don't think any of my children know what their father really did when he was in the Navy during WWII. Sure, he told them he was an Enlisted Naval Correspondent; that he went from ship to ship in the Pacific writing articles to be sent back to hometown newspapers; that he fired those big guns on warships. But his real mission was - Gloops.

Yes, he told me in great confidence that he was a Gloop Maker, First Class. With the war now 50 years in the history books, I don't think I would be giving away any secrets if I described his duties.

He was transferred from ship to ship so often because there just were not that many Gloop Makers in the Navy, and whenever an admiral or other high-ranking officer wanted a Gloop, he would be given orders to come aboard their ship. He would be assigned an area in the engine room where he would work on the Gloop. They were all made to rigid specifications, but each one had to be made by hand. He had a small forge and a lead alloy was the material used. Often he would make several Gloops before one met with the officer's approval.

Then, on a day when the seas were calm, Gloop Maker, First Class, Gerken would be called to the bridge with his perfect Gloop. All the ship's officers would gather around. A special leather thong would be passed through the loop at one end of the Gloop, and the Gloop would be dangled over the side of the ship by the admiral, or the highest ranking officer aboard. (Jack never said if Admiral Halsey ever commissioned him to make a Gloop, but he may have.)

When the beautifully formed object reached the right momentum, the officer would release it, and all eyes would watch as it fell to the ocean below.

GLOOP!!

Daughter Lou told me this following gem that I would like to share.

A Senior Citizen went to the drug store and asked the pharmacist for some Whack. “What?” he said. After the Senior repeated the request a couple times, the druggist said he wasn’t acquainted with that product but he would ask his supplier. “Well,” the Senior said, “I just came from my doctor’s, and he said I was all out of whack.”

(And you all wondered where Wishbone got his sense of humor!)

May 29, 1996

The Cemetery Clean-Up

What a shame the weather was so miserable on Memorial Day!

Do you suppose this was the veterans who have died telling us, “See, you should have never changed Memorial Day from May 30th.”? Just watch — this Thursday will be beautiful!

But the subject of my column is to say how really nice the cemetery looks this year. So many people have worked so hard to have everything ready for Memorial Day. The new archway turned out perfect; the stone pillars look grand; the mowing and trimming was all done; so many people decorated their family graves with flowers; the American Legion and Auxiliary recognized the veterans with flags. (Incidentally, there were 92 flags placed this year.)

There are so many people to thank for all this work and preparation. Mayor Drue Vitter formed a cemetery committee last winter, and then LeRoy Kindler really got the ball rolling when he and his family wanted to donate an archway in memory of their folks. Thanks to Pat Lembke and Annette Groves for picking up that ball and putting in untold hours organizing and calling. Thanks to Art Anderson and Dayton Kline for the many hours spent on beautifying the cemetery, and to the dozens and dozens of Hill Citians who have trimmed and mowed and raked and brought bright, new flowers.

A special thank you to John and Sue Lykken for the wonderful job they did making the new archway. It is one thing to say it would be nice to have something, but making it happen takes hours and hours of work. We are so fortunate to have the Lykkens right here in town to do something this beautiful. It is often the quiet folks who surprise you with their talents and ability.

Thanks, too, to Dakota Stone for donating the slate for the pillars by the archway, and to the “Mitchell girls” for seeing that the other pillars were done at the same time. Thanks, too, to Warren and Vance Alexander who helped raise the arch last Saturday; and to LeRoy Zander and the West River Monument Company for the work done on repair of several headstones a few weeks ago.

It is always dangerous when one starts naming names when thanking folks for a project, and I apologize to those I have missed. Now that the big push is over, I do hope everyone will not give up! With all the moisture, that grass is going to grow. So, those who have been trimming, please keep on trimming. Those who have brought flowers, please see that they remain fresh. A big thank you to everyone.

And one last thought to close this out — perhaps everyone would like to make a journey up the hill to look over the cemetery improvements. Would I be amiss by suggesting May 30th as a good day to have your own private Memorial Day observance?

October 2, 1996
Random Thoughts

Thoughts while sitting on the front step:

*Boy, we live in a beautiful part of the country! The weather this past weekend, and today, has been as close to perfect as it can get.

*Why should we have to have new license plates? By the time the legislature haggles this one over, passes a bill to make Bill happy, gets the plates made, three of the five year "life" of the current plates will be over. We can certainly save a bit of money by just getting along with the ones we have until the regular time comes for new plates.

*Boy, we live in a beautiful part of the country! The aspen leaves are turning yellow and the accent they give to the hillside of green pine is just gorgeous. I did drive up to Spearfish this past weekend but didn't go thru the Canyon. It didn't appear that the leaves had turned that much from the view from I90. Perhaps they were more colorful in Spearfish Canyon itself. I noticed more color around here this morning than last Saturday.

*Heard the 1880 Train tooting as I was sitting on the step (yes, I really was sitting on the front step here). Last week for the train until next summer. That thought, even more than the recent snow, really makes one realize that summer is over.

*Looks like we have some really good teams this year in both football and girls' basketball. As the mayor said in his column, Go Rangers!

*Went in to Rapid City and out to Iseman Mobile Homes. Don't see how the proposed building would be large enough for a library. Talked with Charlie McKay and, as he says, the council is still seeking input, looking for options. We do have to take care of our library, tho. It would be a shame to go backwards when we have such a good facility.

*Boy, we live in a beautiful part of the country!

January 8, 1997
Blizzard of '49 in Wicksville, South Dakota

Going through old letters and papers recently I came upon a letter from my brother, Howard Sime, written on January 9, 1949. Howard was a student at the School of Mines at that time and he and his wife and one year old son were some of those who weathered out the Blizzard of '49 at Wicksville. With all the inclement weather South Dakota is going through now, it may be of interest to cull a few quotes from Howard's letter telling about their experience.

They had spent the Christmas vacation at our home in Aberdeen and were on a bus going back to Rapid City. (College students in the 1940's didn't all own cars-in fact, very few did). When they left Pierre, there were clouds forming, but there were no storm warnings on the radio station in Rapid. At Wall there was some snow, but still no warnings of a bad storm. About ten miles out of Wall, the weather got bad. Several times the bus stopped to check if they were still on the road. The lights of Wicksville looked pretty good when they got there about 5:30; they had left Pierre at noon.

Wicksville at that time had two gas stations and three houses. At first everyone went in one of the gas stations, but soon moved over into the station owner's house. His wife was stranded in Rapid City, so the bus people had the house to

themselves. Howard said it was a small house measuring about 30'x30'. There was an upstairs, but no heat there so everyone was on the first floor which had an oil heater. There were 23 adults and 8 children; the kids were 3 one-year olds, one 3-year old, one 5-year old, one 6-year old and one 10-year old. There were two beds and a couch which made into a bed. They took the mattresses off the beds and put them on the floor. The older people got the beds (with no mattresses), next older got the mattresses (with no bed), the rest slept on the floor or sat up all night so they could have a bed during the day.

The gas station had a grocery store connected to it and the supplies were kept in the house. There were plenty of canned goods but very little meat or milk, altho there was canned milk for the kids. Another stranded person had a crate of eggs in his truck, so that was shared.

The first night, everyone fixed their own meal but by Monday afternoon they could see it might be quite a while before they got out, so the food was rationed. The price of the groceries was kept track of and the bill divided up between the people staying there. An example of how prices have changed in 46 years, it cost them \$1.50 per person from Monday evening until Friday night. There was one lady who had cooked for threshers, so she took over the cooking duties. The owner of the home had just filled his cistern with water from Wall, so they had plenty of good water all week. The cook used over 15 pounds of potatoes for potato salad for one meal. She made bread and put it on the table hot. Howard commented that she should have made the bread at night and it would have lasted longer than that good, warm fresh bread.

There were also about 15 single men in the gas station. There were ten other people in the other gas station. One of the other houses had some high school kids. Those in the gas station ate out of the cans, but were also recipients of that good home-made bread and some hot dishes.

The plows didn't get through until Friday night and the last two days when the weather was clearing, everyone was anxious and on edge. Howard commented on how well everyone got along. There was only one lady who caused some friction as she wanted special treatment and complained about the children. She also didn't help with the cooking or with dishes.

It was about 11:00 Friday night when Howard and his family reached their home in Rapid City. They lived in a motel unit on east St. Joe at the time. He said it sure felt good to get in their own bed. On Saturday, he went out to get groceries but found that Rapid City was also about out of meat. He did find a T-bone and a small beef roast. Said he didn't know when meat had tasted so good. While in Wicksville, the only meat they had was three cans of Vienna sausage that had been cut up and put in spaghetti sauce. The lucky ones found a piece. He said the stores in Rapid City were crowded with people stocking up on food in case there was another storm.

January 29, 1997

Junque

I really admire folks who can put on rummage sales. Anyone who has been in my mobile home must surely think, "Why doesn't she get rid of some of this stuff?" (I was going to say "junk", but to me, it is "junque".)

One of the main reasons, besides procrastination is — memories. That yellow

sweatshirt that I seldom wear I got at the Waltzing Water show in Branson when I went there on a tour with Dorothy Jean Milhans. So, it brings up happy memories of Jeanie. Likewise, the shirt from White Sands, New Mexico, reminds me of my friend Larry Dowd. The one from Cape Cod, which no longer goes around me (!), was from when my granddaughter Helen worked in Boston. How can one throw these things away? Even that faded blue T-shirt with the original Sue T-rex on it, I bought as the FBI was raiding BHI. Not a happy memory here, but one we must not forget. Actually, I did take a nice sweater in to the Pak-Rat Palace that I had gotten in Spearfish years ago and only wore once or twice. I'm almost tempted to go buy it back myself.

And dishes! I'm worse there than with clothes. I have the bowl my mother used for whipping cream — although I don't have the beater that goes with it. This is a story unto itself. The bowl is a brown ceramic with a tiny indentation in the bottom where this beater fit. My mother had no confidence in my cooking abilities (rightfully so) and when I was going to have friends over one evening I planned to serve gingerbread with whipped cream on top. Of course Mother made the gingerbread and, before leaving for the evening, asked if I was sure I could whip the cream. Indignantly, I assured her I could. Well, when I went to the kitchen to get the refreshments ready, the beater wouldn't turn in the cream. I kept turning the handle, but nothing would happen. I called a friend out to help and she could do no better. A second friend finally got the job done. You wonder why??? My first friend and I were both left handed and we had unscrewed the little nut on the bottom of the beater! Our right-handed friend had turned it the "proper" way and re-screwed it!

But I digressed and now the column is long enough. But you also know why I have so much stuff in my home, whether I will ever use it again or not.

February 12, 1997 **Birth of the 50-Star Flag**

Somehow the month of February seems more of a "patriotic" month than does the month of June when Flag Day is observed. Probably it is because Presidents' Day, the births of Washington and Lincoln, come in February. During June, one thinks of weddings and graduations, and in the Gerken family, of birthdays.

All of this prelude is my reasoning for choosing the month of February to tell the story of the "Birth of the 50-Star Flag." All the time I was growing up and during WWII, our country had a 48-star flag. The article from which I am taking this information appeared in the Modern Woodmen newsmagazine for Spring 1996. I thought it very interesting and hope you all do, too.

Robert Heft of Napoleon, Ohio, was a junior in high school in Lancaster, Ohio, when Alaska and Hawaii were admitted to the Union in 1959. Needing a project for an American History assignment, he came up with the idea of designing a 50-star flag. There was originally much talk about Alaska being admitted as a state and Heft studied the political climate of Alaska and realized there were more Democrats than Republicans. His theory was that another territory would probably be admitted for political balance, especially considering that the 1960 election was on the horizon.

Heft knew that a state could be admitted to the Union at any time, but that a star could only be added on July 4. He therefore reasoned that two states would be admitted near the same time so that the flag would only have to be altered once.

awesome brick building that now fills the lot between the Call of the Wild and Ceal Morehouse's house. The "unveiling" was just this last week when the huge sheets of plastic which were covering the front of the building came down and we could all see what had been going on behind them. There is room for three businesses and it will be exciting to see what these businesses are.

And more unveiling is Dee Schrier's new venture. You really didn't think she would sit around twiddling her thumbs when she resigned from the school, did you? Well, she's been busy as a beaver getting her new shop ready to open in March (and that's not far away!). Hear she will be carrying dresses and other clothing for the larger-sized gals. She said they'd be too big for me, but she hasn't put a tape measure around me lately — so we'll have to see. She will have other goodies in there, too.

The Chute Roosters has had — or is having — a facelift with new owners, Bert and Lavern. Their Grand Opening featured a very tasty buffet. And lots of activity up in the Hayloft with the Arts Council's old time movies (that Denise Etzkorn just can't be beat!), and The Dukes of Rhythm are coming out of hibernation to play for a fund raiser for the Library.

A new owner in the flower shop, new ideas at the Double D, remodeling in the Granite Sports building, besides all the business people who are there for us all year round, and we appreciate.

Now, doesn't this make you want to cut your vacation short and come home to Hill City right now! We'll all be here!

March 11, 1998

Embarrassing Moment in Gregory

Just last week I mentioned that I needed "inspiration" in order to write another column. Well, at breakfast in the J-9 Cafe last Saturday morning, friends "inspired" me to write about embarrassing moments. We all have experiences which at the time are very embarrassing but when we look back on them, everyone gets a big laugh.

This particular incident happened when we still lived in Gregory. The street we lived on was graveled, so I could hear cars as they turned off of Main Street only a couple blocks away and started down our street. Oldest daughter Lou was a junior or senior in high school when this happened. She was on a date and, as usual, I was listening for the sound of the car turning on to our gravel street so I would know that she was home safely. Well, the car came and I heaved a sigh of relief, which ultimately turned into sighs of exasperation as she didn't come into the house. And didn't come in the house for quite some time. I got up and flicked the porch light on and off, then repeated this in about 15 minutes as she didn't take the hint.

Finally, I put my coat on over my pajamas and went out to confront my daughter and her date. I knocked on the window of the car, interrupting an amorous embrace, and who should look out at me but the girl from across the street! Well, I scooted back to the house mighty fast and I never mentioned the incident to her (or her mother) and she never spoke of it to me either.

When I got back in my house, I went upstairs and there was my sweet, innocent daughter sound asleep in her bed!

that my brother had attended the “Mines”, and he asked what his last name was. When I said “Sime”, Guy rattled off “Howard Sime, Class of ‘49, Mechanical Engineer.” That’s faster than you can look it up in a directory.

Guy also used to call to talk about the Balm of Gilead trees in Hill City. He claimed that his father had planted the Balm of Gilead trees that were in town. (Now that should stir up some comments from old timers who think he either did or didn’t.)

Here’s something totally unrelated to anything. I found an article from the *Seattle Times* dated October 12, 1982, in my jumbled files. It tells of plans to build a “Unisphere” near Sioux Falls. The purpose seemed to be to siphon off some of the tourists on their way to Mount Rushmore in the Black Hills. The complex was to include a geodesic dome, earth studies institute, a future farm and other exhibits in medicine and communications. It was to open in 1985. What has happened to this? Does anybody know?

Thanks for all the nice comments on my columns, especially the call from Dale S. That was nice of you and was appreciated.

April 9, 1997 Candidates’ Open Forum

One of the few drawbacks of a weekly newspaper is the deadline. If something of interest happens in the community after the paper has gone to press, it is a whole ‘nother week before it can be covered. Often, it is such “old” news that it isn’t even of interest any more.

Such was the case of the Candidates’ Open Forum held last Tuesday evening, April 1st. By the time a regular news story would appear in the paper, the election would be over. “Old News”.

However. I was very impressed with the meeting and feel that, even tho the election is over, some mention should be made of the fact that the forum was held, the candidates were all quite knowledgeable of the office they sought, and hopefully next time, the meeting will be scheduled so that a write-up will make it into the paper. There was a fair turn-out of citizens, but could — and should — have been larger.

Much thanks to Hugh O’Gara, who lives in our school district, for the fine article he wrote for the Rapid City Journal covering the meeting.

Thanks, too, to Ann McKernan and Danny Bergin for their organization, and to Neal Larson for a great job of moderating the forum.

Speaking of candidates, do you know who Fred Harris, Ellen McCormack, and Henry Jackson were (or are)? And for what office they were running? I should leave this as a cliff-hanger with the answer to appear next week — but don’t know if I’ll have a column next week. So, the answer. They were all candidates in the Democratic Primary Election of 1976. Other candidates were Morris Udall, George Wallace — more familiar names — and, the winner, Jimmy Carter.

May 7, 1997
Trip to Seattle

Talk about ramblin', that's just what I have been doing. As many of the folks in town know, I have been to Seattle to visit. To visit lots of people. Daughters Lou and Chris both live in the fair city of the Northwest now, as well as granddaughter Helen and her little boy Casey. Also, I have two cousins there and good friend Lyla Ludington.

Chris met me at the airport and the girls kept me busy until Lou and Helen put me back on the plane a week later. Sure did have a good time!

I was fortunate to be in the Seattle area at the time of the Tulip Festival. Where we see fields of corn and wheat, there they have equally as large fields of beautiful tulips. Each color of tulip was in separate strips, and then one huge field with all colors together. Really a beautiful sight. The farmers all had a little side-line business going — charging to park in their yards. With hundreds of cars coming and going every day, the whole family was out directing the parking, and reaping the benefits. We also took in a very good street fair in Mt. Vernon the same day as we saw the tulips.

For those of you who know Lyla Ludington, she is looking really well and as always, very nice. Lyla and her daughter are both working in a fabric shop and doing quite a bit of sewing. Lyla took me to a nearby Community Center that is on the order of Keystone's, except it is of course much larger. It is a combined youth center and senior center and there were people of all ages there when we went. With a paid manager and staff, they can arrange activities for everyone.

Another highlight of the trip was taking the bus to downtown Seattle to see "Lou's office building". Actually, it belongs to US West, but that is where Lou works. From her office on the 32nd floor, you can see all over downtown Seattle and out over Puget Sound. I acted like a real tourist and took pictures everywhere, including my favorite department in Nordstrom's department store.

Had a really, really nice visit with my two cousins. In the 1930's my mother's whole family moved to Seattle (or perhaps, it might have even been in the 1920's as think Lois and Jeanette have lived there almost all their lives). My cousin Lois lives only a couple blocks from where Lyla lives; Jeanette lives further south in the town of Kent. We sort of lost contact in the years we were all raising families and now we're getting caught up on lots of family happenings.

Got to see the Chittenden locks over by Ballard where the ships go back and forth from the ocean to the bay. It was interesting to see how the locks work, a miniature version of the Panama Canal. We also saw the Ballard "Troll". Ballard is a Scandinavian town and a troll was built under one of the bridges. I had envisioned a cute little troll tucked up in a corner, but it is huge and it is ugly! One would sure be careful going over this troll's bridge.

Of course the best part of the trip was seeing everyone; seeing Helen and her Mike and their little boy Casey, who is the best looking, smartest great-grandson one could have! Enjoyed getting to know Mike better and meet his mother. It is always interesting to see where your kids work, and so I did enjoy seeing Lou's office and meeting her co-workers, and having lunch and getting a tour of the restaurant where Chris works. (That place is a story all by itself!)

Good trip, good time, will have to do it again some time!

May 14, 1997
Memorable Teachers

This is the time of year when we pay tribute to our teachers. I am sure everyone has at least one teacher whom they remember over the years. I have two who stand out in my memory. There were several teachers who were outstanding teachers, but these two were ones who stood out from the many.

The first was my sixth grade teacher at Garfield Elementary School in Aberdeen. Her name was Emma Odegaard. At the time I thought she was middle-aged, but she must have really been fairly young as her boy friend would often come at recess time and stand on the sidewalk and watch. Miss Odegaard was a slim redhead, always dressed very nice and always wore high heels. There were no teachers' aides then, so she would be out on the playground playing softball with us, or whatever game we were into at the time. She was very musical and our music appreciation class did much to kindle my interest in music, something my dad also encouraged. She would play records and we would have to identify the various instruments which were playing; also name the composition and composer. At Christmas time, she took the entire class to a concert of the Messiah.

Miss Odegaard did not limit her association with her students to the classroom but went ice skating with us in the winter months and bike riding during the spring. However, she was not just a "buddy", she could also let us know in no uncertain terms when we let her down. I can very well remember hiding behind the kid in front of me so I wouldn't have to look in her eyes when she scolded us. Even though I wasn't the guilty one (who, me?), I couldn't bear to have her unhappy with us.

The other teacher I remember so well was my high school band instructor, Art Schwuchow. He came to Aberdeen from working in the steel mills in Pennsylvania. The band director he replaced was a very likeable fellow who had very little discipline. Well, Mr. Schwuchow changed that in a hurry. Something unheard of these days—and a good way to end up in jail—he would "invite" the boys who were trouble makers outside for a bit. When they came back in, they were no longer a problem. Our band was run almost as a semi-military unit. During concerts, our feet were flat on the floor, eyes straight ahead, absolutely no talking. During ball games, the band could have no snacks of any kind until we were done playing. He would also periodically roam through the reed section of the band and break any reed with lipstick on it. (He also bought many reeds for those who could not afford them.) Yes, he was very strict, but we were also very good, winning all competitions we entered, both concert and marching. At the outbreak of WWII, Mr. Schwuchow enlisted in the United States Marine Corps.

Perhaps this column will motivate you to remember some of your favorite teachers. If they are still around, it would be nice if you let them know the influence they had on your life.

May 21, 1997
Memorial Day - Dick

He was my folks' first-born. From the very beginning, they doted on him. He was first in a "best baby" contest; he was so smart that he was skipped a year and a half in school; he was an outstanding track star in high school (in spite of competing with boys who were almost two years older than he); he was a promising artist in the one year of college that the folks could afford; he got a job with the county highway department, designing some of the roads he worked on and helping to support our family with his salary. And he was one of the thousands who were killed in World War II and that we will be honoring on Memorial Day.

Yes, my brother Dick was special to my folks and to our family. And so were so many of the veterans who have served our country in wars waged in far corners of the world. So many lives filled with promise of what they might become — and then snuffed out. Wars really are terrible in the destruction of homes, countrysides, and the lives of families.

We also want to remember the many veterans who did return home as their lives were also changed forever. An article in the Rapid City Journal stated that there will be no Memorial Day observance in Sheridan, Wyoming, as they could find no one willing to put together a program. What a shame. I would recommend that anyone who has doubts about what the servicemen went through read Ernie Pyle's "Ernie's War". You wonder how any of them came home at all.

Thanks to our Hill City American Legion post, Hill City will be observing Memorial Day with a program at the cemetery. I hope there will be many who will take the time to say thanks to our veterans by attending this ceremony.

May 28, 1997
Summertime & Memorial Day

"Summertime and the livin' is easy." When those words were written, the tourism business must not have been the successful industry which it is today. Summertime in the Black Hills is the busiest time of the year for many folks.

Many of the local businesses, in addition to the motels and campgrounds, depend on their income over the summer months to see them through the winter. Likewise, Black Hills residents (yours truly included) look for summertime employment to augment their income. High school students are out earning some money to help on their college fund — or to pay for a much needed (?) car.

I do remember the time when the summer months really were "easy". The land around Aberdeen is so flat that I would ride my bike out of town for an hour, then turn around and ride back. No ten-speeds in those days; also not much traffic so one didn't have to worry about cars. Then, lying in the yard watching the clouds and imagining different shapes. How much more lazy can one get?

I did have summer jobs as I grew older, though. The very first one was the summer after ninth grade working in the office of some governmental agency (I've forgotten the initials). My dad knew the director and got me the job of filing; that's all I did, was file papers. I knew the alphabet, so got along pretty well. The next summer, I worked as a clerk in Woolworth's and the following year, in the "Dollar" Kresges. Kresges had two stores in Aberdeen at that time; one was the regular "Ten Cent Store", the other one carried a little better grade of merchandise and we called

it the “dollar” store. I can still remember how I mangled oil cloth for customers. There was no guide for cutting, just some not-too-sharp scissors and an equally not-so-sharp clerk. And I did all this for 17 cents an hour!! But think of the experience!

Actually, summers in the Black Hills are exciting. There are so many activities to be involved with, so many things all over the Hills that one has to often make a choice of what to attend. So, as June is just beginning, I hope everyone is looking forward to a great summer. Enjoy!

It was too bad we couldn’t have had the Memorial Day ceremonies at the cemetery again this year. If any of you drove up the hill, you are aware how nice the cemetery looked — and still looks. The City has contracted out the mowing this year and the contractor has done a very good job of mowing and trimming around the headstones. Sure was nice not to have the hassle we had last year — although it did bring out a lot of concerned folks who worked together to get a job done.

Also, the City maintenance men have repaired the old benches and made them look like new! The weathered and broken seats have been replaced and the iron “ends” have been painted. Good job, David!

Incidentally, 92 flags were placed on the graves of veterans by the American Legion Auxiliary this year. Mary Cornelison read 160 names on the Roll Call of Honored Dead at the Memorial Day program. A break-down of these shows veterans from the Civil War - 28; Spanish American War - 1; World War I - 38; World War II - 63; Korean War - 16; Vietnam War - 10; Persian Gulf War - 1; and Gold star Mothers - 3. Some veterans served in more than one conflict and it is the policy of the Legion to list them under the last conflict they were involved with. Lots of brave men and women from a little town like Hill City!

June 25, 1997

First Trip to the Black Hills

During the month of June one will see several 50th anniversary notices in the paper. Well, 1997 is a 50th anniversary for me, too. It was 50 years ago that I spent the summer as a college student working at Sylvan Lake Resort — my first “encounter” with the Black Hills.

A fellow student at South Dakota State in Brookings beguiled my roommate and me with tales of excitement, fun, and much money to be made working in the Black Hills during the summer months. As it turned out, we had all three — quite a bit of excitement, lots of fun, and also made a good deal of money for that time.

A friend of my brother drove us from Aberdeen to Rapid City where we got a motel for the night. A pair of really innocent, naive young gals, we readily accepted a “gentleman’s” invitation to come to a party at his cabin. Ha! How dumb could we have been! Well, it was a party with a number of other men there, but when they found that we didn’t drink and really stuck together, our host soon took us back to our motel. At the time, I didn’t realize we could have been in a mess of trouble, but I did know that this was something you didn’t tell your folks about or it would have been the end of our Black Hills adventure.

The next morning, we got a bus up to Sylvan Lake and were put to work cleaning cabins. This wasn’t what we had in mind when we applied as we wanted to make the big tips as waitresses. We did soon get put on as waitresses in the beautiful

dining room and had a really good summer. I don't think I have ever worked as hard before or since, but it was a good experience. We worked seven days a week all three meals, but there was plenty of time in between meals and in the evening to see the Hills and enjoy the beauty of Sylvan Lake and the area.

Paddy Ingvalson, who was much later to become the managing editor of the Hill City Prevailor, had a little combo at the time and they would play at the resort every Tuesday and Saturday evenings. Paddy used a megaphone to announce the songs and for singing — no loud P.A. systems then. The song “South” still reminds me of Paddy and Sylvan Lake.

My roommate and I each had about \$500 saved by the end of the summer, and hard to believe now, but this took us pretty much through the next year of school. We both worked in the school cafeteria for meals, but \$500 would be just a fraction of expenses for students nowadays.

July 9, 1997

Jack Grimm Born, and more

Lots of ramblin' to do this week. Couldn't decide which topic to write about so will try to squeeze them all in - sort of like I do when I write letters. Which could bring up a whole 'nother subject, the dying “art” of letter writing.

The most important thing in my life this past couple weeks has been the birth of my grandson, Jack Robert Grimm (named after his two grandpas). His birth announcement appears elsewhere in the paper. His parents are Jeanette and Mike Grimm and he is, of course, the best looking baby in the whole Black Hills area. The folks at the 1880 Train, where Mike is an engineer, also took special interest in young Jack and kept all the workers on the train advised of the progress of his birth and his final arrival by way of signs and banners on the side of the depot. Just one more thing that is special about living and working in a small town. The Gerkens and Grimms are all proud of the new addition to our families and proud, too, of Jeanette and Mike. Congratulations!

If you will remember in my last episode of “Ramblin”, I mentioned the song “South”. Admittedly, this song is not a barn-burner on any hit parade these days and probably 90 percent of the folks haven't even heard of it. The only time I do hear it is on a collection of Lawrence Welk songs I have. Welk and his band used to come to Aberdeen when I was in high school. I didn't dance, but my dad and I (yes, Ed W., my dad) would sit in the balcony of the Civic Center and listen to the music and watch the dancers. There would always be at least one “set” where the only ones allowed on the dance floor were those who could waltz. Many folks nowadays think Lawrence Welk type music was pretty “corny”, but it was very danceable and he entertained many people for many years.

Three days in a row this past week there has been the report in the news of the death of a well known person. First was Robert Mitchum, then Jimmy Stewart, and on the Fourth of July, Charles Kuralt. Of the three, I was most affected by the death of Kuralt. His series of On the Road television programs and then books made him seem a part of everyone's life. His Sunday Morning programs were always very worthwhile and a good mix of interesting subjects. His obvious love of our country somehow makes it fitting for him to join Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, who also died on the Fourth of July. He, too, was a great American.

July 30, 1997

Lars Seim Trip to California

With the twin celebrations in the Black Hills this past weekend of the Days of '76 and Gold Discovery Days, both commemorating the discovery of gold in the Hills, I was reminded of my own grandfather's search for the tantalizing metal.

Lars Torge Seim came from Norway to the Chicago area in 1849 when he was a young man of 19 years. Somewhere along the line he Americanized his name to Lewis T. Sime. My dad's sister passed along a copy of their father's trip across the plains to California in 1852. I will submit it here just as she wrote it:

"Left Chicago, March 6, 1852, going down the LaSalle River to St. Louis. Remained in St. Louis 3 weeks.

Missouri: Went up the Missouri River to St. Joseph by boat.

Nebraska: Up the Missouri River to Platte River, taking north fork of Platte River to Ft. Kearney. May 12th.

Wyoming: Up north fork of Platte to Ft. Laramie, June 11th. Then along river to Sweet Water River. Down to headwaters of river and over to the Sandy to Ft. Bridger. Spent 4th of July, 1852, here.

Utah: Then to Echo City, and to Salt Lake City, July 10th, and left August 15th, going over the desert to Placerville.

Nevada: Followed Humboldt River and Carson River to Carson City.

California: Reached Georgetown...Coloma...Placerville (called Hang Town)...Auburn...Sacramento...San Francisco...and San Diego. Was at San Diego a long time. Returned to New York by way of Panama by boat."

I don't believe my grandfather was very successful in the gold fields although we do have a letter seal which was said to have been made from gold he mined. Outside of his expenses, perhaps this was the extent of his "wealth". At any rate, he returned to the Chicago area in 1859 and married a fellow Norwegian, Rhoda Amundson, in 1860. They moved to Northwood, Iowa, in 1870 where he had a general store.

It seems to be the current pursuit to retrace these long ago trails. What fun it would be to follow my grandfather's steps!

September 24, 1997

Lawrence Welk, German Fest, History Conference

Where did the summer go? This is a question that almost everyone in and around Hill City is asking. It seems that every year the tourist season, which is planned for months in advance, is over before we have hardly gotten used to it being here. Sort of like my opinion of making an apple pie — I'd spend most of a morning making the crust, peeling the apples and baking the pie, only to have it completely gone in about five minutes. Only hope that everyone's summer left as good memories as my family's memories of my apple pies.....Now, that is a far-fetched comparison if there ever was one!

For ardent followers of my columns, you may remember that I once mentioned the dances in Aberdeen with Lawrence Welk as the band. I was very happily surprised last week at the German Fest while visiting with a member of the Bubbling Quartet. In the flier for the Fest, they were listed as being from Bismarck, North Dakota, but they are actually from Strasburg, Welk's home town. This gentle

man said that one of his brothers lives on the old Welk homestead, had married into the Welk family. Many of their tunes had the style of the Lawrence Welk orchestra with which we all are familiar. He said he had played accordion since he was ten years old, and he looked to be in his seventies now. He agreed with my memory of Welk only allowing those who could waltz to be on the floor during the waltz sets. The Bubbling Quartet ended their portion of the program with “My North Dakota Home”. It’s real easy to substitute “South Dakota” in the title. It is a beautiful song.

The German Fest was much fun — and also much work for the core of German Club members who spearhead this every year. The tent is expanded every year and the crowd seems to show up to fill the extra space. There seemed to be more local folks there this year, which is good as I am sure all these folks who attend the Fest (what was the estimate, 1200 on Saturday alone?) patronize local businesses while in town

Another worthwhile event just this past weekend was the West River History Conference over in Keystone. Now, here, I was disappointed to see so few Hill Citians in attendance. There are papers given on many subjects of local interest; it is often difficult to choose which ones to attend. I thought the Thursday evening session was especially interesting with Wat Parker talking about how “Lost Treasures” can somehow become magnified with time; Alice Smith and Pastor Herb Cleveland giving really interesting papers on the C.C.C.’s; and Bev Pechan’s tales of the Strato Bowl flights. This is truly a worthwhile event and I hope it will continue.

October 8, 1997 Journalism & Editors

When I attended South Dakota State College (now University), I majored in Sociology and Home Ec with a minor in English. However, I “hung around” the Journalism department so much that I somehow got on the list as a journalism graduate. I still, almost 50 years later, receive the PJ Bulletin. It used to be the PRJ Bulletin, for Printing and Rural Journalism. They have done away with the “Rural” and I suppose that someday in the not-so-distant future, the “Printing” will also be deleted. This is a sign of the times I guess. We are no longer as rural as we used to be. And printing now is not at all what it was like when the department was first started — linotypes and hand-set print. In fact, I used to bemoan the fact that I hadn’t taken a class in linotype. In 1950, I figured I would have had a career for life. Yes, times really do change.

However, in the last issue of the PJ Bulletin, a report is given on a lecture by John Gottschalk, who is president and CEO of the Omaha World-Herald Company. Mr. Gottschalk stated that while most adults get the majority of their news from television, a whopping 87 percent still do read a newspaper at least once a week. People are wanting more quality in their news and they used the newspapers as an information source for news of their neighborhoods, a decision-making tool, and just for pleasure.

And who is it that decides what this news shall be? Your editor. He, or she, can determine what gets into the paper, where it is placed, and the amount of coverage news shall receive. The recent turmoil over the role played by “tabloid journalism” in the death of Princess Diana is an example of the harm that can be done by what an editor chooses to emphasize. On a local level, the articles which your editor of The

Prevailer features on the front page are what receive your attention first and foremost. I think he does a pretty good job.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all my children for the efforts they put forth to nominate me for the Spirit of Dakota award. Son Ed was the instigator and wrote the nominating letter, but he enlisted the help of the others in trying to remember just what "Mom" has done over the years. I was certainly surprised and greatly honored just to be nominated. Thanks, kids!

What a shocker the price that "Sue T-Rex" brought at the auction! We all knew she was valuable, but, wow, that's a lot of money. A big thank you to Stan Adelstein for offering to help BHI.

October 15, 1997 Local Miscellany

Honest, I did not threaten son Don (your editor) that I would disinherit him if he didn't put me on the front page. It really was just a coincidence that I wrote about the importance of the editor's choice of news on the same week that I happened to be honored. And it was an honor. I congratulate Lorraine Huntimer of Oldham who was named this year's Spirit of Dakota. I am sure every one of the nominees was worthy of the honor.

The Hill City Lions Club is certainly to be commended for all the civic projects they do. Specifically, the recent Screening Unit which they sponsored here in Hill City. Everything was done quite professionally and with little or no waiting in line. Thanks, Lions!

The Open House at the Old World Plaza on Friday evening was very nice. What a bunch of good munchies! The officers of the Chamber of Commerce were there to greet people and the shops and offices were open for all to see. The only problem, you're not supposed to go in the shops with food, and there was so much food, it took awhile to "scarf" it down. However, nice idea; nice evening.

Have you been to The Journey yet? My friend Dolores Rolland urged me to go about a month ago. I had been a bit skeptical as the building itself is not too inviting. But I was impressed. It is a different kind of a museum, to be sure. I thought it was very interesting and was especially happy to see the articles donated from Aimie Roulette's estate on display and with credit given to her. Also, something a little different, your ticket is good for three visits, which is nice. The first time through I sort of "skimmed". I have been back once since then and started at the beginning and read every sign, looked at every display — but only got about half way through in two hours. So, now I will go once again to see the rest of the exhibits, still on the original entrance ticket. A bonus throughout the rest of the year is being able to see some original paintings of Harvey Dunn and Oscar Howe. Seeing the original of "The Prairie Is My Garden" was unbelievable; the colors are so much brighter than in the prints of the picture. A good experience.

Something I have wondered about — all the big push to eliminate cigarette smoking, and yet it seems to be the "in thing" to smoke cigars!?!

Sure a nice surprise to see Dave Morin on the street last Saturday. He is living in Vermont now since retiring from the Forest Service.

November 5, 1997

Libraries

If you want to see a happy librarian, stop in at the Hill City Library and talk to Muriel Anderson. After more than a year of frustrating indecision, the City has agreed to help in the relocation of the library to the larger area in the back of City Hall. As I understand it, a lot of the credit goes to new councilman Bob Callahan. With all the activity in town looking toward an expanded future, it would be shameful to have the library slip backwards. As Muriel said, the town will only support so many fund raisers, and it would be years before enough would be raised to do the amount of renovating needed. A progressive city should have a progressive library.

Libraries have been a part of my life as long as I can remember. In the 1930's, when I was growing up, people could not afford to buy books as much as they do now. There were not the more affordable paperbacks. People relied on the city libraries for their reading material. I think my dad must have stopped at the library almost every day on his way home from the office. He always had books, magazines and newspapers beside his chair in the living room. The old Alexander Mitchell Library in Aberdeen was a fascinating place for me.

When we lived in Gregory and my children were growing up, we made good use of the library there. The Federation of Women's Clubs managed the library although it was financed by the city. After living in Gregory for about eight years, I was finally appointed to the library board. There, the board chose what books to order and it was an interesting process. I'm afraid a bit of censorship went into the selection. Since I have moved to Hill City, a new library has been built in Gregory with donations from Dr. Donald Nemer.

The Hill City Library has made great strides in the past twenty years or so. From a room in the back of the old bank to the very fine library we have now, many citizens have been responsible for the growth. Even now the shelves are full, with more books just waiting to be put in circulation. Can you remember when the library shared space with the city finance officer? Celia Bradley would work in the mornings, and then on the designated library days, movable shelves would be rolled out in the afternoon. There was room for about a tenth of the books we have now.

It will be exciting to watch the future growth of what has become a really good library. A lot of the credit goes to our librarian who has been abreast of new trends and new techniques.

November 19, 1997

Typing

I love to type. Perhaps that is why I like to write articles for the paper, letters to my friends and relatives. It gives me an excuse to sit down at the typewriter and while away a half-hour, hour or whatever. It seems I can write so much faster on the typewriter than by longhand. If any of you have seen my hand writing, you will know that, while it may start out fairly legible, by the end of the page, it gets pretty messy. I can't write fast enough to keep up with what I want to say.

When I took typing in high school — do they even teach typing any more??? — it was one of my favorite classes. I know, I'm a bit weird, I liked algebra too. And English. But I digress. In typing class we were seated two to a table. When you were

typing the lesson you could not look at the keys on the typewriter. My partner and I would race to see who could go fastest. If I thought he was speeding up, I would go faster, too. Occasionally, your fingers would get on the wrong keys and what a mess that would be — also a zero for your grade. But it was fun.

My dad had an old L.C. Smith typewriter in his office and when I would go up to see him after school, you could hear that typewriter just rattling away. He used the two-finger method (also used by his grandsons Don and Ed). They could type every bit as fast as I can using the “correct” method.

Son Ed and Sandy gave me an electric typewriter a few years ago and weaned me off the old manual. It has a spell-check which is really handy. Sure beats using Liquid Paper or the little pieces of correction paper.

I haven’t graduated to a word processor or computer yet. The way the world is progressing, they will probably be old stuff by the time I get around to using them. Ah, progress.

November 26, 1997
Hill City’s Young People

What a great day Hill City had when the big Christmas Tree came to town! All the many months of planning by several people was well repaid. It was certainly fitting that there was such a good turn-out here in our town, I thought, since this is the home of Jon Crane’s Gallery and the beautiful painting of the tree. Even though the tree itself came from the Northern Hills, I sort of felt it was actually “our tree”.

Big congratulations to all the high school kids who have been putting Hill City in the news lately — the good news! Most recently, the Lady Rangers who went to the State tournament (first time ever!!). And our other athletes, the Ranger football team who went to the play-offs, and Jacob Christensen who did so well in cross-country running. Also, the Ranger pep band went to the Girls State “A” tourney to show that Hill City has musicians as well as athletes. Our town also has artists who have displayed their art work at the new cultural center, showing another facet of the students’ talents. Congratulations to all these students.

With this being the Thanksgiving season, we can be thankful for these young people who are demonstrating that they can accomplish so many positive things. Personally, I am thankful for my family and friends, and for my good health which permits me to live in my own home. Many of us are also thankful to have Pete Larson back home among us, although I am still upset about the whole fiasco that took him away for a couple years. (I think I would have more faith in the DM&E proceedings if Kevin Schieffer were not involved. Shaving his mustache off does not give him more credibility.)

However, I do want to end this column on a positive note, so let’s say thanks to the teachers who work with the school kids, and thanks to all those who help to make Hill City a good town: the city council, city employees and our business people. Happy Thanksgiving, everyone!

December 3, 1997
Counted Cross-Stitch & Embroidery

As many of you know, I enjoy doing counted cross-stitch embroidery. Well, I have been working on-and-off on a Siamese cat in a flower garden for some time. I usually keep two or more projects going at a time so I don't get tired of one thing. Also, there were a couple of new babies that I wanted to get something made for that took preference over my cat picture. Anyway, I had done part of the cat, then worked my way down the arrangement of flowers. This was sort of time consuming as there are three shades of blue, also three shades of green, plus a fence post and little snippets of the cat showing through. All going real well as I finished the flowers. Then, as Pam Frink would say — SHRIEK! — there is one line between the flowers and the cat that don't match up!! I have counted and re-counted to see where I went wrong, but everything seems to check out. There is just one line that doesn't jive. Guess this is where ingenuity will have to intervene as I am certainly not going to take out all those stitches.

I used to do crewel embroidery, and I do think the finished product is more striking than cross-stitch. But it seems there aren't as many crewel projects available in the craft stores and/or catalogs as there once were. Also, the cross-stitch is more relaxing for me.

While my family was growing up, I did no embroidery, even though I had really enjoyed doing it as a young girl. My mother used to do tatting and crochet work in the evening — when she wasn't darning socks — but I never learned to do that. Now I wish I knew how to knit and crochet, but don't want to go through the process of learning. One of the pleasures of having your family grown and having more time for your own diversions is being able to sew or read or paint or whatever, without feeling like you should be doing something productive. Retirement is rather nice.

December 10, 1997
Kris Kringle and Other Happenings

What a busy weekend we had in Hill City. There was a huge crowd in town for the Kris Kringle Craft Fair; it was hard to find a parking place even over by the Senior Center. I do hope that the folks who were here visited our downtown merchants (and bought!) as well as the craft fair. We have some really nice stores in town of which we can be proud.

Talk about being proud, I was very honored to be named Grand Marshall of the parade. Thanks to the Chamber of Commerce for so honoring me and thanks to Jim Cummings for the really neat convertible to ride in. Believe me, it is much easier to ride in a parade than march in one. Thinking back, I think this is the first time I have ridden in a parade since I was a little kid and my sister would dress me up for the Gypsy Day parade in Aberdeen. Anyway, it was much fun to see and wave to friends along the route. One of my friends suggested that I sign the column this week as Miss Kringle, but to me that title will always be for Wally Matush.

It was also nice to see Cindy Turner, a local gal who is "on her way". Cindy is doing what she has always wanted to do, singing and playing Country music, and we can be proud of her. Good luck always, Cindy.

The Tour of Homes sponsored by the Arts Council was very nice and a lovely

way to spend a beautiful day in the Black Hills. Many thanks to those who opened their homes to us and helped out the Arts Council.

Other activities over the weekend consisted of the Robbins and Burden families and friends cheering Jeff Robbins in the Nutcracker production in Rapid City. They all said it was a really good show.

And the official “welcome home” party for Pete Larson was nothing short of stupendous. Boy, Pete, if you don’t know how many friends you have and how happy they are to have you back amongst us, well, this was a good indication.

It has been said that there are more activities in the relatively small area of the Black Hills than anywhere in the state. With so many organized things going on, one wonders how there is anyone left over to go around and patronize all the events. Isn’t this a great place in which to live! As Jack Gerken used to say, “It’s a BEAUTIFUL day in Hill City!”

December 17, 1997

Packing Suitcases

Just a random thought: I wonder if President Clinton has someone who takes care of his clothes for all the traveling he has been doing. Packing and unpacking his suitcase — altho you never see him carrying one on the plane when he leaves. (What president was it who used to carry his own wardrobe bag over his shoulder? Sounds like something Jimmy Carter would do.) But back to Clinton. I bet Hillary doesn’t see to it that he has clean shirts and socks for his trips. And how about Madeline Albright? She travels a bunch, too, but she doesn’t live in the White House, so maybe she has to see to her own packing

When my husband traveled a lot we had two sets of clothes and he would take the clean set and leave the dirty laundry, suits, etc. for me to take care of during the week. That way the weekends weren’t spent taking care of laundry. Bet our Senator/Mayor Vitter doesn’t have a special valet either now that he is burning up the the highway between Hill City and Pierre. My cheers of support to Patsy.

When we see all the politicians and entertainers who travel so much, we really don’t think of these mundane every day things — but someone has to!

January 28, 1998

Trip to Seattle - 1933

What a wonderful trip I had over the holidays! My daughter Jeanette and her husband Mike Grimm tucked me in the back seat of their Bronco along with grandson Jack. We were prepared for the worst of weather, but had nothing but the best; the roads were clear the whole way.

At a couple points in western Montana I noted signs along the road saying it was the Yellowstone Trail. These triggered memories of another trip many years ago along this same trail. But, boy, was it ever different in the year of 1933!

Many, many times I have thought how brave my mother was to take off from Aberdeen, South Dakota, in a Model A Ford with four children on a trip to Seattle, Washington. My dad had to stay at home because he was one of the fortunate ones who had a job in the thirties. All my mother’s relatives were in Seattle and she hadn’t seen them in several years, so away we went.

Mother didn’t drive — never did learn — so all the driving was done by my 17

year old brother. I think my 15 year old sister did know how to drive but can't remember that she did any of the driving on the trip. She was too busy sneezing with her hay fever, which was really aggravated with all the dust. It must have been a miserable trip for her, now that I think of it. We took Highway 12 out of Aberdeen, which goes across northern South Dakota and then into Miles City in Montana rather than Billings like I-90 does now. Highway 12 was called the Yellowstone Trail. Looking at a present-day map (I just love to look at maps and see where roads go and where towns are), I see that Highway 12 is still there and eventually runs into, and becomes a part of I-90.

There was much road construction at the time of our trip in the summer of 1933, which made for even more dust for my sister. At times my brother would get the old Model A going as fast as 40 mph and the dust would come up through the floor boards and Mother would make him slow down. We kids would all whoop and holler, going so fast. We stayed in tourist cabins (no nice motels then) and had to bring our own bedding, which was folded each morning and piled on the back seat of the car. We did get a regular hotel one night, I think it was in Helena, so that my sister could get a good night's sleep. Also, probably, my mother!

The safety people would really shout if they saw how we all traveled back then. The cars had no trunks, so everything was piled here and there in the car. We had a luggage rack on the running board, which very effectively blocked the doors of the car on that side. Since I was only six years old and not too big, I sat in someone's lap most of the way. Seems like sometimes they would pile all the bedding up and I would sit on top of it so I could see out the window.

To add to the courage of my mother, on the trip home we went up through Glacier National Park. That was very exciting. When we were almost home and had gotten gas for the last time, I was the only one with money left, a whole 17 cents which I offered to my mother and she refused it. My, but my dad was happy to see us all home safely when we got back to Aberdeen. We had been gone a month, but what a month of adventure for us all.

(Now, I'll wait to hear from my sister to see how my recollection of our Seattle trip compares with hers!)

February 11, 1998

A Letter from "Home" to Our Snowbirds

You folks who left these northern climes for the lure of warm sunny days have missed one of the most beautiful winters we've had for a long, long time. And we read of rain, wind, and even snow down South where it usually "ain't". Of course our winter months are not over yet. Old Mother Nature (helped this year by the capricious El Nino) is probably saving our snow storms for April and May — when you all come back home.

Yes, Hill City has had a good winter. The road crews have been able to work almost every day on the "new and better" road between Hill City and Custer. Every time road construction occurs, I weep for the old landmarks that disappear; but then, later, as I skim over the new highway, I find myself wondering where these old sights actually were located. We enjoy the new, but still miss the old.

The weather has also been kind to the construction crews working on Vic Jepsen's new building. Ah, you folks who have been away will be amazed at the

awesome brick building that now fills the lot between the Call of the Wild and Ceal Morehouse's house. The "unveiling" was just this last week when the huge sheets of plastic which were covering the front of the building came down and we could all see what had been going on behind them. There is room for three businesses and it will be exciting to see what these businesses are.

And more unveiling is Dee Schrier's new venture. You really didn't think she would sit around twiddling her thumbs when she resigned from the school, did you? Well, she's been busy as a beaver getting her new shop ready to open in March (and that's not far away!). Hear she will be carrying dresses and other clothing for the larger-sized gals. She said they'd be too big for me, but she hasn't put a tape measure around me lately — so we'll have to see. She will have other goodies in there, too.

The Chute Roosters has had — or is having — a facelift with new owners, Bert and Lavern. Their Grand Opening featured a very tasty buffet. And lots of activity up in the Hayloft with the Arts Council's old time movies (that Denise Etzkorn just can't be beat!), and The Dukes of Rhythm are coming out of hibernation to play for a fund raiser for the Library.

A new owner in the flower shop, new ideas at the Double D, remodeling in the Granite Sports building, besides all the business people who are there for us all year round, and we appreciate.

Now, doesn't this make you want to cut your vacation short and come home to Hill City right now! We'll all be here!

March 11, 1998

Embarrassing Moment in Gregory

Just last week I mentioned that I needed "inspiration" in order to write another column. Well, at breakfast in the J-9 Cafe last Saturday morning, friends "inspired" me to write about embarrassing moments. We all have experiences which at the time are very embarrassing but when we look back on them, everyone gets a big laugh.

This particular incident happened when we still lived in Gregory. The street we lived on was graveled, so I could hear cars as they turned off of Main Street only a couple blocks away and started down our street. Oldest daughter Lou was a junior or senior in high school when this happened. She was on a date and, as usual, I was listening for the sound of the car turning on to our gravel street so I would know that she was home safely. Well, the car came and I heaved a sigh of relief, which ultimately turned into sighs of exasperation as she didn't come into the house. And didn't come in the house for quite some time. I got up and flicked the porch light on and off, then repeated this in about 15 minutes as she didn't take the hint.

Finally, I put my coat on over my pajamas and went out to confront my daughter and her date. I knocked on the window of the car, interrupting an amorous embrace, and who should look out at me but the girl from across the street! Well, I scooted back to the house mighty fast and I never mentioned the incident to her (or her mother) and she never spoke of it to me either.

When I got back in my house, I went upstairs and there was my sweet, innocent daughter sound asleep in her bed!

March 25, 1998
High School Students

I had another “wake up” call this past week regarding our high school students. We get so immersed in the national news about how American students just don’t measure up to high standards any more, but what I have seen of our Hill City students has been very positive.

First, our 1997 Girls State representative, Hillary Johnson, gave a wonderful report to the American Legion Auxiliary a while back. It was a comprehensive report of her experiences at Girls State and showed that she actually participated in the activities and learned from them. I’m sure she had fun while at Girls State, but the basis of her report showed that she appreciated why she had been chosen to represent Hill City.

Then, as one of the judges of the Americanism essays, I was impressed by the ones written by this year’s Girls Staters, Amy Benning and Beth Cornelison. Admittedly, I was disappointed that the teachers did not make this a class assignment, but the essays from these two girls were very good. I hope Beth and Amy will reap benefits from their week at Girls State this summer.

I haven’t talked to either Alison Benning or State Senator Drue Vitter, Alison’s sponsor for being a page in the South Dakota Senate, but I do know that it is only the best students who are selected as pages. My daughter Lou served with Kay Jorgenson, when they were in high school, as pages in the State House. Lou always said it was a very rewarding experience, and Kay has been active in state politics ever since. Perhaps we’ll hear from Alison in the political arena in future years.

Also highlighting the good points of our students was the presentation of Shakespeare’s “Comedy of Errors”. I must admit it took me a while to catch on to the “Elizabethan English”, but the performances of all the students was great. What a lot of memorizing! Costuming, make-up and stage designs were all good and added to the success of the play. And let us not forget the teachers who had the courage to tackle Shakespeare! Congratulations Peg Henson, Joanna Hicks, and the whole cast.

And now, shift gears a bit ——— Dave Greenlund is not only pastor of the Community Lutheran Church here in Hill City but he is also an artist. Pastor Dave has been invited to exhibit his pottery at the New Gallery at the School of Mines during the month of April. Rev. Robert Gilroy of the Pine Ridge Reservation will also be showing his paintings. Together, the two pastors/artists will be illustrating religion in art. There will be a show opening and reception on Sunday, March 29, from 3 to 5.

April 8, 1998
Telecommunications circa 1904

With the advent of all the new telecommunications going on around us lately, I thought it might be interesting to give a bit of history in that field. Guglielmo Marconi was famous for his work in developing the wireless telegraph. He produced a practical system in 1895 and the first transatlantic signal in history in 1901. This bit of information is taken from the World Book Encyclopedia.

Now, I have been copying my father’s diaries from the early years of this century. In the 1904 Diary is a news clipping that I thought very interesting. I don’t,

however, know what newspaper it came from. Here it is, in its entirety. You can see what a change has occurred in this century in our telecommunications.

The Daily Paper at Sea

The achievement of Marconi on the Cunard liner *Campania* in publishing a daily paper every morning during the trip from Liverpool to New York marks a new stage in the practical employment of wireless telegraphy. Though the paper had its defects, and though some of its news appears to have been garbled in transmission, it is fair to anticipate such rapid improvements in the service that before long every large liner will be able to keep in continuous contact with one shore or the other during the entire time of its voyages.

The *Campania* received news first from the station at Poldhu in Cornwall, then from Cape Breton, and finally from Cape Cod. Poldhu was not lost till the ship was 2300 miles away, and for two days in mid-ocean communication was maintained with both shores. The Cape Cod station was first heard from at a distance of 1030 miles.

It may be that many ocean passengers will regret the intrusion of the outer world on them during their voyages. These will be the ones who find a special restfulness in getting now and then beyond the reach of interference from their everyday affairs, whether for good or evil. That they will be in the minority, however, is sure. The daily paper, condensed and lean though it be, will be to most people as welcome at sea as on shore. The next development to be expected will be the equipment of the ships with sending as well as receiving apparatus powerful enough to act from the center of the ocean. With that the relatives left behind by the passengers will come in for their share of the benefits as they read the daily reports of a safe voyage.

April 15, 1998

Movie Star Scrapbooks

I am writing this on the day after the Academy Awards extravaganza. I go to so few movies any more that I don't even know the names of the people who are nominated for awards, or very few of them anyway. I used to look forward to the Oscar presentations like it was the most important event of the year, first listening to it on the radio and then watching on TV.

One feature of this year's Oscar program that I thought was nice was showing all the past Oscar winners from way back; Shirley Temple was there and many more. They said it made the program run even further over-time than it would have, but I thought it was worth it.

While growing up, I was a great movie fan. Of course movies only cost 10 cents then, going up to 25 cents when we turned 12 years of age. I was so small, I still got in for a dime for another extra year, tho. Every Saturday we usually went to the Lyric Theater, as that was where the cowboy movies were shown. As I got older, my friends and I changed to the Capitol Theater in Aberdeen for more "sophisticated" movies. We could while away a whole Saturday afternoon if it was a good movie by staying for two shows — at the one price of 25 cents.

About three or four of my girl friends and I "saved" pictures of movie stars. Big Time! I now even hate to think of how much money we spent on movie magazines, at a time when our folks didn't have that much money and our allowances were usually a quarter. Each of us would lay claim to certain stars and would concen

trate on collecting pictures of those people. We'd write letters to the stars at their studios asking for pictures and when they arrived (hardly anyone in those days turned down a request), we'd wet our finger just a little and check out if the signature was authentic or a rubber stamp.

My favorites were Clark Gable, Tyrone Power, Robert Taylor (wow, he was good looking!) and a few others. My friend next door saved pictures of Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald. Our folks must have wondered if we would ever really grow up and quit this "foolishness".

When I finally did grow up and left home for college, my mother donated all my scrapbooks to the children's ward at the hospital. I've wondered many times what they would be worth on the market today where there is such a demand for memorabilia. Believe me, we had it by the bucketful. Ah, well, so it goes.

And now, here I am, not even knowing the names of the current stars. Worse yet, I didn't even care that much for the movie "Titanic", one of the very few that I've gone to in the past couple years. Maybe I've grown up too much?

April 22, 1998

Ironing

Thoughts while ironing: I have about 3 or 4 tops/shirts/blouses, whatever, that still require I set up the old ironing board. And it really is an "old" board as it was my mother's, but still serves the purpose and is very sturdy — it may become a family heirloom, it is so sturdy!

Anyway, I have often wondered why mothers always dried the clothes on the clothesline and then brought them in the house and liberally sprinkled them with water, rolled them up, and put them in the basket ready for ironing. Why not just take them out of the washer and eliminate a couple steps there? However! I still dry the things needing ironing, sprinkle them (using a genuine first-time-around Coke bottle), roll them up ready to be ironed later that day, or the next, or the next!

Ironing seems to be something that is very easy to put off. There were times when clothes would mildew waiting for me to iron them. That was before I discovered that you could put them in the freezer and they would keep forever. Just like the mending basket, if I waited long enough, the kids would out-grow the clothes and you could eliminate the whole process.

I used to have an awful lot to be ironed. My husband would need a clean white shirt (only the front of the shirt and the cuffs were to be starched) every day. Well, he would come home from the office, throw that shirt in the wash and put on another clean work shirt to "putter around" in. So that was two shirts a day for him. At that time, the girls wore dresses to school and the boys wore shirts that needed ironing also.

Seems I always did the ironing in the evening after everyone had gone to bed. Fewer interruptions and no worrying about some little one pulling on the ironing cord. While living in Pierre, my next-door neighbor would come over and we'd visit and share a can of beer. In those days, that was our relaxation. Whoopee!

I really do kind of like to iron, believe it or not. While growing up, I was only allowed to do handkerchiefs, napkins and pillow cases. Did you know that you fold napkins and handkerchiefs differently? My mother was quite definite on this. I was never allowed to do my dad's shirts, tho, as I wasn't that accomplished then.

When wash-and-wear shirts first came out, a bachelor friend stated that he had to take seven showers in order to get all his shirts washed each week.

May 13, 1998

Photography and Photographers

Let's have a big cheer for — photographers! I don't mean the camera-people who make life miserable for celebrities by sticking cameras in their faces every time they come out of their homes, or the ones who dwell on the sensational news items.

Rather, let us honor those who take us to the far corners of the world to discover things we would never see otherwise. While watching the wonderful Alexander the Great documentary on PBS, I thought many times of where the photographers were as Michael Wood (the host of the series) drove across the desert. We saw the cars from a distance, with no tracks showing in between, and then we were right there in the cab of the car with a close-up. As Wood came into a tunnel or other hard-to-reach place, the cameraman had to have been in there first. Also, on other TV documentaries, as fearless mountain climbers scale those perpendicular cliffs, who is off to the side — or even above them — but the photographer, who is also packing camera equipment.

We have become spoiled by all this wonderful photography, have even come to take it for granted. The National Geographic has for many years treated us to wonders from around the world, in every nook and cranny. Let us not forget William Illingworth who was the photographer on Custer's 1874 Expedition through the Black Hills. It was Illingworth's job to chronicle the trip and he did it with difficult glass negatives in a virtual wilderness with unknown (to him) resources. Also noteworthy here are Richard Sowell and Cameron Ferweda who covered the same route one hundred years later with Donald Progulske to produce the really interesting book, "Yellow Ore, Yellow Hair, Yellow Pine", which shows the change in the Black Hills in that relatively short time.

Still photography by our local photographers is also to be commended. Some of those I am personally acquainted with are Jane Lamb, Ed Gerken, Dick Kettlewell, and Detlev Prautzsch, all of whom take pictures of our local scenes that are both beautiful and historic. I am sure there are many others, too. Ed is in the process of taking "now" pictures to go with his "then" pictures in his Hill City books. I am anxious to see the results.

One phase of photography I am not so sure about, but it is apparently the future of the genre. This is digital photography. Like computers, I am not very well versed on how this works, but it sounds like one is able to "doctor" the picture so it comes out the way you want it to. In a way, is this true photography?

Just a footnote: Welcome home, Ed Hanson! And Great Concerts, George Ewing! We'll miss you, but wish you well in your new ventures.

(Found this old column of Don's and thought I would insert it in with mine.

Written May 28, 1987)

A LIGHT TOUCH by Don Gerken

Howdy, faithful readers! It's been so long since I've written my column for the *Prevailer* (almost two months!) that I almost feel like I should introduce myself all over again.

But, I just had to write and tell you all about the latest update we've implemented in the production of the newspaper - one that gives it a true "personal" touch.

The paper is now written by hand by over 3,000 Tibetan Lamas every week.

We jot the copy down, and then the Lamas take over from there. A crew of two produces each individual copy that you read - one working on the text and the other on the headlines and photos - all hand written. And if you don't think the Lama doing the photos has his work cut out, just look at a photo in the paper with a magnifying glass. All those little dots take plenty of time to put on paper.

But the editorial staff here at the *Prevailer* thinks the Lamas are doing an excellent job, aside from the occasional typographical error. And they save all those printer's bills in the production department. You know that Tibet has a lower wage scale than even South Dakota, so a crew of 3,000 costs less than regular printing. We just hope they don't organize to form Lama Local No. 209. A union demanding higher wages would ruin the process.

Now, if you've been in our office in Hill City, I'm sure you've noted that we don't have 3,000 orange-robed, shaved-headed people running around. These Lamas are all living in caves far up in the Hills, just as they do in Tibet. Their only concession to modern technology is the computer and modem that links them up to receive copy. But, they've covered the computer with branches to better blend into their surroundings.

If the Lama crew continues to work for us, we plan on expanding the idea. Look forward to another 1,500 Lamas arriving to personally deliver copies of the paper, thus saving mailing costs. Remember, the *Prevailer* is ready to go to any length to serve you better!

(Since I didn't get around to writing an April Fool's Day column, the words above will have to suffice!)

June 3, 1998

Comments on local issues

Not much time to "Ramble" now since I have started my summer job, but I do want to mention how nice the cemetery looked for Memorial Day. So many folks decorated their family graves, I think about the most that I can remember in recent years. A lot of the credit for the excellent appearance is due to the work done by the company which has contracted to do the mowing last year and again this year, Sparky's Lawn Care. Thank you to the City Council for making the decision to contract this job to someone who knows how to do a good job. Bare areas have been seeded, low spots filled in, and trimming has been done around markers. This was a time-consuming job for city workers and a frustrating one for volunteers, so I believe it is money well spent to hire professionals who know how to do the job well.

Have you noticed the many positive reports that our Hill City school and students have received in the papers this spring? The recent article in the Rapid City Journal on the Friday Group was great. I had not heard of this activity before and it really sounds interesting. Thanks to all the moms who have helped broaden the students' interests and to the school authorities for their encouragement in this endeavor.

Now I am going to write about something more controversial. Although not as adamant as my friends Gene Koevenig and Bob Hayes, I was in the early contingent of those against any changes at Mount Rushmore. My summer job is with the Mount

Rushmore History Association, so I am able to see what has been done up there, and I must admit that I think it is turning out much better than I ever expected. Yes, all the rustic atmosphere that we all liked is gone, but we have to realize that it is gone and will never be like it was before. We must move on. It is a completely new Memorial and really one more fitting for the new century. I was privileged to get a preview of the new museum and it is going to be awesome. As I walked around the other afternoon when I got off work, the visitors had much more room to walk, to stroll, or just stand and look at the Four Faces. At this point my main regret is that the Hill City Fife and Drum Corps won't be playing there on the Fourth of July for the first time since 1982. What a thrill that would have been to march through the new Avenue of Flags!

June 17, 1998 **“What If——”**

How's your imagination? Have you ever played the game of “What if”? Now, let your imagination go to work on some of these ideas:

What if Bobby Kennedy had not been killed and had become president in 1968 — which I am pretty sure he would have — unless (another “what if”) Barry Goldwater had beaten Lyndon Johnson in 1964.

Going back further in politics, what if Wendell Willkie had defeated Franklin Roosevelt in 1940. An accompanying “what if”: what if the present two term limit for president had been in effect and FDR had not been eligible to run in 1940, who would the Democrats have nominated in his place? And, if Willkie had won and he died when he actually did in 1944, we would have had a President Charles McNary for at least a short time.

What if the shenanigans of Watergate had been publicized early enough to turn the public against Nixon, would we have had a President McGovern?

In my personal life, what if I had taken a summer job in Texas that I had been offered after my sophomore year in college? For one thing, you would have a different managing editor at *The Prevailer* as there probably wouldn't have been a Don Gerken — in fact, there probably wouldn't have even been a *Prevailer*!

What if I had decided to go to St. Olaf College instead of South Dakota State? My life certainly would have been different, probably not as interesting, but who knows?

A final what if: What if Wally Matush had remained in the tailoring business in Rapid City?

In our imagination, we can remake all of history. What if???

June 24, 1998 **Views From My Window**

Views from my rear window are not like the ones Jimmy Stewart saw in the Alfred Hitchcock movie, “Rear Window”. The ones I see are the beauty of the Black Hills. I look across Spring Creek to the rolling green hills along the Old Hill City/Keystone Road. At least at this time of year, they are green, nurtured by the plentiful rains we have had.

The view is just as pretty in the wintertime when snow covers the ground, or in the fall when the aspen leaves are turning color. It is all framed in my rear bed

room window. Unfortunately, guests who come to my home are not treated to this view, but that does not mean that I can't enjoy it. Often I sit on the edge of the bed and just "look". (Bedrooms in mobile homes are not usually large enough to have easy chairs as well as beds.)

I watch deer feeding on the slope of the hill, or in my yard when I had the bird feeders out. Not that I begrudge the deer eating the bird seed, but they knock the feeders down and have a voracious appetite that got a bit expensive. Their slender legs and hooves, and their quick response to any noise are fascinating.

Just recently I have been watching the flood waters recede from what I call my "bottom land" along the creek. Our resident pair of ducks who fly over from Major Lake were there the other afternoon. The drake was standing on a little rise where the grass was above the water level and was preening himself. First one wing would stretch out and he would peck at it, then the other wing, and so on. His mate, all the while, was scooting around dipping her head under the water and harvesting the clippings from when I mowed the area. Of course as soon as I came out with a camera, they were off amid loud quacking for their home on Major Lake.

I have my landlady and long-time friend Bette Matkins to thank for this beautiful view. Years ago (in fact, many years ago!) when I purchased my mobile home from Tom George, I was looking for a place to "park" it and Bette said there was room on her land. This, long before planning commissions, long before Krull's Market or most all the buildings in Hill City Eastside. Bette had my trailer positioned so that I would have a "nice view". And I thank her for it. I do enjoy the beauty from my rear window! Incidentally, an added "what if" to my column from last week: What if Bette Matkins had stayed in the car business in Sturgis? Would Hill City Eastside have evolved? Our town has been fortunate to have so many people with vision come here and work for the betterment of the town.

July 22, 1998 Black Hills Celebrations

The "dates" of summer seem to be hurtling by, but the hot "days" of summer have been here long enough. By the "dates of summer" I mean the many festivities which we in the Black Hills look forward to each year and on which each town focuses its celebration. The Hot Springs Miss South Dakota celebration is over; Hill City's Heart of the Hills Days are over (and were really great!); Wall's Celebration Days are in the past for 1998; Spearfish's Festival in the Park is done for another year. Soon Custer's Gold Discovery Days, Deadwood's Days of '76, Biker Week, and Keystone's Holy Terror Days will be in the history books for 1998.

These special celebrations give both the tourists and local folks something to look forward to and make each summer season interesting. I wonder if there is any other small area in the country which has so many celebrations in such a short period of time?

The Heart of the Hills celebration was tremendous this year. Lots of people! For me, personally, it was fun to watch a parade instead of being in the parade. I was impressed to see governor-candidate Bernie Hunhoff and his running mate Elsie Meeks walking in our parade. And I missed seeing State Representative Gordon Pederson. Just a guess, but I bet this is the first parade Pederson has missed in Hill City for twenty years. He has faithfully appeared in not only Heart of the Hills parades but

also Kris Kringle parades as well. While I am sure our new representatives will do a good job for us in Pierre, we do owe Pederson thanks for representing our district, giving of his time and expertise for so many years. God speed, Gordon, hope you can enjoy your retirement watching from the sideline.

I mentioned Bernie Hunhoff earlier. I really enjoy his *South Dakota Magazine*. The range of articles is vast. When I read of the great diversity we have in our state, I think we should have kept the slogan “Land of Infinite Variety”. Even the ads in the magazine are interesting; they make you want to go to the particular towns to see the shops and businesses. Several of our own Hill City merchants and resort owners advertise in the magazine and I hope the exposure brings them customers who read their ads.

Part of being in business is letting the public know what you have to sell. Editor Don does a good job of laying out the ads for *The Prevailer* and the support of merchants is vital to the life of the newspaper. One form of advertising which I do not like is the heavy paper inserts in some magazines (*TV Guide* and *Readers' Digest* are two culprits). The first thing I do when the magazine comes is tear out these ads and throw them away. They really are annoying to me. *The Prevailer* and *The South Dakota Magazine* are proof that advertising can be informative and attractive.

July 29, 1998

Thoughts on Spaghetti and Such

A year or so ago I treated myself to a special container to hold spaghetti. It has an ingenious lid that will measure out one serving or two servings. I don't know how I ever raised a family without a special container for spaghetti. I guess I just cooked the whole package. Anyway, now that I cook only for one, I adjust the lid to measure out the proper amount. But that never looks like very much, so I add about half again as much. Lo and behold, I end up with too much spaghetti! Not enough for another meal but too much to throw out. And the next time, I do the same thing!

Portions. How do cooks (either professional or moms) figure out how much to cook? Although two of my daughters have been professional cooks, they sure didn't learn their secrets from me. I wonder many times if my kids got enough to eat as usually a can of veggies or fruit would do for the whole family. Now, I alone can polish off a can of something in two meals. I do remember that there was a lot of snacking going on. In fact, I remember yelling (yes, I used to yell) that they should at least let me get the dishes and stuff cleaned up from a meal before they raided the kitchen for snacks. Somehow, they all grew up.

When my sister and brothers and I were growing up in the “Thirties”, our mother would make a can of Campbell's soup feed the whole family — though usually she “wasn't hungry”. I bet that was quite common in a lot of families then. Thinking back, this practice must have affected her health, too, as I can remember when Mother first weighed 100 pounds. It was cause for much whooping and hollering.

I was very sorry to read of the passing of Herb Blakely. His work with the library in Keystone and the West River History Association are testaments to his worth in the Keystone area. He will be missed.

September 9, 1998

Birthdays

On having — and celebrating — birthdays: Those of you who keep tabs (now where did that expression come from?!) on the Birthday Calendar in *The Prevailer* will have noticed that I recently added another year to my age. Celebrating with me were two good friends, Bev Johnson and Mary Inman, all three of us August 26ers.

When I was growing up in the Sime household in Aberdeen, birthdays were a big deal, mainly because my dad enjoyed it so much, I think. When we came down to breakfast on our special day, gifts would be piled up at our place at the table. And we could choose what we wanted for dinner that day. I usually chose liver (!), much to my brothers' dismay. Angel food cake was always the "birthday cake". Our neighbor, Mrs. Weishaar, often baked me an extra birthday cake, in addition to the one my mother made. As I have mentioned before in my column, I was quite spoiled as a child — and loved it.

Similar to our special treatment on our birthdays, there is available in many gift shops the Birthday Plate, or Special Day Plate. This is kind of a fun way to honor children — or adults, too — in the family.

I guess I inherited my dad's enjoyment of buying presents for my kids as they were growing up. In fact, I still do. Daughter Jeanette has often told me that I might have some money in my bank account if I'd be a little more sensible in the gift-buying department.

One really big celebration that none of us involved will ever forget was a number of years ago when Jack Bader had the Claim Jumper out where the Harney Lounge now is located. The aforementioned Bev Johnson, Jerri Spencer (who also shared "our day") and I went out for a friendly drink. A few other "locals" whose birthdays were in the near vicinity joined in and we had quite a celebration. I think that was when I decided to quit drinking!

This year I just couldn't get in the birthday mood and told friends and family, no gifts, please. Well, as might be expected, my kids didn't do as they were told, and went together on a long-wanted and much appreciated canopy over my door. I also received unexpected gifts and lots and lots of cards, so my birth date was noted. I guess it is kind of fun to be spoiled on at least one day a year.

September 23, 1998

Non-Speeding and History Conference

Doggone, a person can't just mosey on down the road any more. Coming back to Hill City from the West River History Conference in Keystone on Friday afternoon, I was in a "reflective" mood, thinking how beautiful our Hills are with all the "green" this year; what a history there is in the development of the Hills, the colorful characters, and just plain enjoying the drive. Looked in the mirror and here was a string of cars starting to stretch out behind me. So, stepped on the gas and got up to 55 again. (I was only down to 45 mph.) I can see why there is a minimum speed limit on the Interstate, and I, too, have often said that the slow driver can cause accidents as well as the speeder. But, still, it would be nice sometimes to be able to just "mosey along" and enjoy the drive.

Did enjoy the History Conference. It is something which I look forward to every year and I thank the Keystone people for presenting it. The passing of Herb

Blakely was a blow to all those involved, but everyone sure rallied and it was a good conference. Congratulations to Esther Lettellier and Rev. Clayton Smith who tied as recipients of the “Zoom Zoom” award this year.

Heard by the phone line that my old buddy Nick Kenaston is still singing for ceremonies. He was awarded the first place trophy plus a cash award by the Boys Club Board of Directors in Rapid City for singing “Amazing Grace” at the 8th Annual Summer Jam this past July. It is a real talent to be able to stand before a crowd and sing, especially solo. I tried it once before a small gathering of friends and had the most shaky vibrato you never wanted to hear. Nice going, Nick.

Attended the Arleen Lippman estate sale on Saturday and got a few mementos to remind me of Arleen, tho Arleen had such a strong personality that one does not really need a material memento to remember her. She was a good friend. It was good to see Ruth and Ron Quail at the sale. Understand that Ruth’s brother was the auctioneer. People who live in Hill City even for a short time and then move away, always seem to check back in.

October 7, 1998

The Fly Invasion

I was beginning to think that we had gotten through the summer and fall without all those pesky flies that we had last year. But then I heard about this meeting that was held somewhere along the Wyoming/South Dakota border. It went something like this:

A large contingent of Black Flies gathered towards the middle of September. Their leader, Head Fly (hereafter to be called H.F.) spoke: “It is good to see such a good turn out of Flies!” (Cheers, much buzzing and other Fly talk ensues.) “You may have noticed what fantastic weather that Hill City has had this year. Well, we can’t let them think that they are home free from our annual Fly Invasion! What do you propose?”

H.F.’s second-in-command, Lieutenant Fly (hereafter to be called L.F.) shouted, “Let’s blitz ‘em!” (Loud buzzing follows.)

H.F.: “Do we have the numbers for a full scale blitz? Maybe we should call in some reinforcements from North Dakota and Nebraska.”

L.F.: “I say, let’s get ‘em now! Don’t wait for those laggards. We can take the town ourselves.”

Again much buzzing among the Flies. Finally a Voice From the Crowd (hereafter to be called V.F.C.) rises above the rest and suggests a committee be formed.

L.F.: “No time for that!” I say, go with a blitz! Now!” Buzz, buzz, buzz.

H.F.: “Quiet! Lieutenant Fly, you are so eager to get going, I order you to take a contingent to Hill City the last weekend of September. See if HiWay Hardware is low on Insecticide. See if doors are being left open to let in the refreshing fall air. If all is favorable, we will attack in full force on the first of October.”

V.F.C.: “Hooray! No better place to be than Hill City in the fall! Let’s go!”

Well, I will agree that there is no better place to be than Hill City, not only in the fall, but all year ‘round. We’ve outlasted those Flies before and we’ll do it again. In the meantime, enjoy these beautiful fall days!

October 21, 1998
Old Prevailor News

I have been on a treasure hunt this past week. Well, sort of a treasure hunt. I have still to find the particular treasure that I was originally looking for, but along the way I have found many “nuggets” that have made the hunt worthwhile.

The hunt has taken place in old, back issues of *The Hill City Prevailor*. What started it all was the little notice in the Town Council minutes of September 28 instructing the city finance officer to ask Les Wade to return the stamp mill which the city “had loaned to him about 5 years ago.” Whoa, I thought it was the property of the old Hill City Historical Society. Several other people apparently thought the same as I.

Well, I attended a portion of the council meeting last week and no one seems to have the facts, only snippets of memory. And so my treasure hunt began. In my little cluttered home I have almost all the back issues of *The Prevailor* — all but those from 1983, one of the crucial years in this matter it seems.

So far, I am through 1978 and have found much information on both the Historical Society and the stampmill, but so far none that would answer the part concerning Mr. Wade. What I have found, though, is many “nuggets” of town happenings that are so much fun to remember: Howard Schrier breaking records in football while in high school; the year of the “Davids” in basketball (David Bradley, David Larson, David Wilson, David Zwetzig. There was also a Carl, Tim, Bob, Gary, Brad, Alan, Todd and Shawn on the team. See if you can fill in the last names.); young couples around town that seem like newlyweds to me have actually been married for 20 years — or more; the Henderson family proudly showing their horses and other 4-H activities; the demolition of some city landmarks and the building of others; businesses beginning — and ending. It has been a lot of fun to even just scan these old papers.

I had even forgotten (but I bet she hasn't) that my daughter Jeanette was given a special award at a South Dakota State Press Convention for being the youngest columnist in the state. Jeanette wrote “Net's Notes” for the *Prevailor* for a couple years, told some family secrets, and had some really good observations on how things looked from a pre-teen's point of view.

When the late Jack Gerken started *The Prevailor* in 1971 none of us visualized what an integral part of the community it would become. Can you now imagine Hill City without this newspaper? Much credit must go to Jack for his “dream come true” and his knowledge and, yes, courage to keep the paper growing; to Hugh O'Gara and Randy O'Neill for keeping the paper in Hill City; and to present managing editor Don Gerken for continuing the integrity and quality of the paper.

I'll continue my treasure hunt in the coming weeks but it's going to be a bit more difficult as I am through the bound editions of the paper and now have to delve into dusty boxes in my shed. Will report further when, and if, I find anything.

November 18, 1998
The “H” Club, Veterans Day, Etc.

Well, I am now a member of the “h” club (small “h”, not capital “H”). This, I have learned, is not a very exclusive club as an alarming number of women over the age of 35 in Hill City belong to the unit. I was going to say at least half, but I haven't

talked to *everybody*.

When I was growing up, the word “hysterectomy” was never spoken; nor did one ever mention any part of the body except for arms and legs, which were quite obvious. Times and mores do change, tho, and bodily functions that were once taboo are now talked about in commercials on TV. There is still enough of the old-time modesty in me, tho, that I hesitate to say much. I have found that my recuperative skills are not what they used to be. I thought I would be “out and about” in a couple weeks. Wrong. When the doctor said to take it easy for eight weeks, he must have looked at my gray hair and tacked on an extra week or two for recuperation.

While this “h” society is exclusively for women, the men have their own chapter of the “h” club for those with hernias. This, too, was an operation that wasn’t talked about years ago. Anyway, male or female, I do not recommend either surgery as a fun way to spend a few weeks.

While I was on the inactive list, I lost a couple of good friends. Margaret Thompson and Floyd Crow. Margaret was such a tremendous supporter of the Fife and Drum Corps when it was in its infancy. We would always try to play “Flowing Bowl” when we marched past Margaret, as that was her favorite. Floyd has been a good friend ever since I came to Hill City and he, too, will be missed. He was a darned good dancer.

Veterans Day went pretty much unnoticed here in Hill City. The Honor America program at the school was apparently scrapped because of the bad weather which closed school on Monday. (Editors Note: The Honor America program was postponed to Friday. Guest speaker was Lt. Col. Barbara Eagers in the Human Resources Division of the SD Air National Guard.) We really shouldn’t have to have a special day to remember our veterans. They certainly didn’t fight for us and our country on just one day of the year. When they were in the service, it was a full-time commitment. And our thanks to them should also be full time, every day of every year. We should also at this perilous time in the Mid-East, support our troops who are being sent once again overseas. The song “Blowin’ in the Wind” comes to mind: “When will we ever learn?”

December 9, 1998 Christmas and Scotch Tape

As I begin to wrap gifts for Christmas this year I am once again reminded of the many changes that have occurred in our lives during the eventful century of 1900.

Historians and sociologists dwell on the large, eventful things such as the evolution of travel from horse and buggy to jet airplanes. We don’t hear quite as much about the little things — like Scotch tape. What a change that has made in our everyday lives. When I was a teenager, we had a tape which we had to lick. Sometimes it held, usually it didn’t. To wrap a gift so that it would look nice, you used straight pins to hold the edges of the paper together until you could tie the ribbon around the package. No fancy stick-on bows either. When we wrapped packages to be mailed, we used lots of string. And there were various grades of string, too; the thin kind that was usually used to wrap meat packages at the store, the stronger kind used for most packages to be mailed, and then twine used for outdoor jobs. I think my dad used all three when he wrapped a package to be mailed.

Paper clips are another handy invention that don’t receive their due amount of

praise. When wanting to hold pages together, we would turn down one corner of the pages and tear a little notch which would then be folded to hold the pages together.

As I am still struggling to understand the basics of the computer, most other folks are flying into the 21st century with more and more handy dandy things which can be done on computers. I can now more fully appreciate why my father never really understood that new-fangled invention, the automobile. He never was a good car driver — but I bet he could do wonders with a horse and buggy! Likewise, I'm a whiz on the typewriter but a klutz on a computer.

On a totally different subject, there was quite a bit written in the newspapers earlier on this fall that said customers would be submitted to rude treatment by clerks this Christmas season. This was in the big cities. Well, I have found just the opposite to be true here in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Our Hill City shop owners and clerks are always most helpful, courteous and friendly. And even in Rapid City, I have been treated really well and had clerks do everything they could to help me find what I wanted. Perhaps we should have our state motto be "The Friendly State."

Really nice Kris Kringle celebration! Congratulations and thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make it a success.

February 3, 1999

Cleaning the Fridge

I did it! I really did it! Cleaned my refrigerator, that is what I did. Took everything out, washed the shelves, vacuumed the coils underneath, the whole bit. I know, some people do this regularly, but I'm afraid I am not one of them. For me, it is an occasion.

At least, to my credit, I didn't find any green or pink fuzzy things hiding in the corners or the back of the shelves. Only threw away a couple things I knew I would never eat, so didn't fare too badly in that department either.

Now the freezer part of the fridge was another matter. There, I found a frozen cherry pie that I had completely forgotten about; think it was from the SHARE program last St. Patrick's Day. I popped that in the oven while I merrily continued on my quest. One odd thing, I tried to group like foods together (I read some place that one should do this) and I ended up with less space than before, even with the pie out of there. How can this be?

Well if this wasn't enough shock to my system, since the table was all cleared off — I had to clear away all my projects so I could put the food from the fridge there — I decided it was a good time to wax and polish it. Gee, it looks nice. Then, of course, had to mop the kitchen floor and, since I had the vacuum out, might as well vacuum the living room, too. One thing just leads to another, doesn't it.

Don't you just feel so virtuous when you finish a chore that you know you should do but have been putting off for a long time? Well, that is how I felt when all was done.....So I rewarded myself with a piece of hot cherry pie, ala mode, of course!

EPILOGUE

I had thought I would end this booklet with the end of 1998; however, had so many comments on cleaning out the fridge that decided to include that one, too. Now, will stop before I get carried away. This is no literary treasure, but may be a bit of fun reading, perhaps the kind one keeps in the bathroom! Enjoy!

An enjoyable collection of
Georgia Gerken's popular
"Just Ramblin'" columns,
from the pages of
the Hill City Prevailor



Georgia Gerken

(8/26/1926 - 11/24/2015)

Back in December of 1995, Georgia Gerken was asked by Don, her editor son, to help out at the local weekly newspaper, *The Hill City Prevailor*. It was to be a one- or two-week stint, filling in for typesetter Pat Lembke, while Pat recovered from surgery. Pat wrote a weekly column, so Georgia penned a brief item, titled "In the Interim" to fill the space. Pat soon returned to work, but friends encouraged Georgia to continue writing her own column as well. This she did, and it is now known as "Just Ramblin'" and is a favorite among the newspaper's readership. We hope you enjoy this reprint of the series, complete from that first brief item in December 13, 1995 to February 3, 1999.

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