

## Graduation, past and present memories

It finally happened to this 'Man of the Plains!'

My first grandchild received her high school graduation diploma on Friday, May 27. On Sunday, May 31, 1953, I received my high school graduation diploma.

My graduation class at St. Joseph's College and Military Academy (exactly so named on my diploma) numbered 47. Alyssa Dreiling, my granddaughter, was one of slightly more than 600 graduates from Eaglecrest High School, Aurora, Colo.

That May 27, 2011 event was one of those truly proud moments. Alyssa is enrolled to begin studies at the Denver Art Institute in early July. She is the daughter of M/ Sgt. Lance and Tobie Dreiling. Lance, by the way, graduated from Goodland High School in 1988 and took some classes at Colby Community College and Fort Hays State University prior to joining the United States Air Force.

As I reflect on my high school years, memories swirl around my head. The seriousness of being a student at a military academy where, incidentally, we knew exactly what we would be wearing to school each day, was offset by the good times, the fun times we had when the day's dismissal bell rang.

I doubt my granddaughter could name more than a handful of her classmates. I have no problem naming all 47 (okay, my yearbook was called in to help with the spelling of several names). Here's the roster: Ron Rupp, Clair Dome, Rich Deen, Pat Giebler, Ernie Leiker, Elmer Miller, Lloyd Urie, Sylvester Leiker, Vern Giebler, Al Rohr, Victor Van Hee, Loren Pfeifer, Cecil Gottschalk, Jim Dalton, Dan Stonecipher, Lawrence Schueler, Louis Dunn, Richard Odette, Donny Wasinger, Howard Spies, Tommy Olson, Harold Engel, Maurice Redetzke, Jim Werner, Urban Hickert, Artie Evans, Tom Depperschmidt, Hilarion Brake, Norman Klaus, Pat McCarthy, Ernie Horinek, Donny Gabel, Alan Ross, Gerald Leikam, Joe Staab, LeRoy Rome, Francis Gatschet, Wayne Gabel, Louis Wellbrock, Gerald Vitztum, John Tasset, Eugene Sramek, Arlen Walters, Jude Werth, Herb Schmidt, Art Winters, and yours truly. I'm sure the classmates will be surprised, but pleased to see their names in the paper once again.

Sadly, some of our classmates are no longer with us, but they are constantly remembered for the roles they played in helping make our class, "The Class of the Corps!"

Absent from my graduation was my father, Richard A. Dreiling, who took ill several weeks before the big event. He died just 12 days later.

St. Joseph's College and Military Academy is now Thomas More Prep-Marian High School. The total enrollment my senior year was 250 with 85 of those being boarder students.

(Apologies if I incorrectly spelled a name or overlooked a name.)

Everybody's now talking about the 2012 presidential election. The Democrats are all set to launch President Barack H. Obama for a second term, while the Republicans have a vegetable soup kind of situation whereby the letters of the alphabet are rapidly being depleted.

It is interesting to watch the postering of the wannabes, and also the names of those deciding against seeking the office. Even Donald "your fired" Trump took off his political mask and walked away from becoming a candidate.

If the Republicans are smart, and I truly believe they are, they would do what the Democrats did in 2008: pick a younger, less known figure! If you remember, the Dems nominated an African-American, little known U.S. Senator from Illinois with a funny name. He went up against an American war hero, Republican Sen. John McCain. I'm still of the opinion Sen. McCain could have won that election if he hadn't brought that frozen lollipop from Alaska, Sarah Palin, on board as his running mate. Fatal political mistake.

I'm looking at someone of the likes of former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty, or if the GOP is more comfortable with an "older" person, Mitt Romney.

What do you think would be the best use of Hays' Kennedy Middle School if the USD 489 School Board decides to close it down after the next school year? I'd be interested in your ideas. Please e-mail your thoughts on that building to me. Thanks, in advance!

Someone sent me a picture of a sticker on the back of a car being driven by an aging gentleman, that simply said, "Florida: God's Waiting Room."

### Snippets

"Mr. Man of the Plains, you are a natural advocate for those of us who are in the same fix you are in. Social Security just doesn't stretch far enough. Please, please keep talking for those of us who don't have a pulpit."

"Your explanation of trying to live on Social Security hit the nail on the head. I hope your writings find their way to Capitol Hill." (They will if you clip them out and mail them off.)

"My aging mother, like you, is trying to make Social Security do. But it don't! Then some of those elected people in Washington want to cut it up like a pig. Shame on them..."

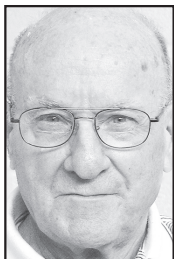
"You may not have a retirement plan, but you have an army of followers!"

"Snoot Gingrich? Now that wasn't nice. Will the person who used Snoot use that same name if he's elected president? We seem to be so touchy when Mr. Obama is referred to other than President."

"Your use of the English language is exceptional. I've learned a lot about how not to write. You are my best classroom teacher ever!" (What makes it even better is I don't charge.)

Snippets to my e-mail address: milehitom@hotmail.com

### Man of the Plains Tom Dreiling



## The best laid plans for a family vacation

Where in the world is Nancy?  
Do you know what Tim Horton's is?  
The exchange rate?  
How a liter of gasoline converts to a gallon?

How fast you can go if the sign says 80 kilometers?

The answer to the last is not very fast.

And working back: Gas is expensive, you just pay what they say and don't worry about it. Today the exchange rate was 95 percent. Tim Horton's is fast food. Nancy is in Canada!

There were fourteen assorted cousins from two generations for the first leg of the journey. Now we are down to 12, 13 when Trish, a fifth or sixth removed cousin from England is with the group!

Working with this crew makes one reconsider the wisdom of breaking away from the crown back in 1776. There are certainly moments when democracy seems less than a stellar idea. As to who ought to be in charge---I do have a regal demeanor, don't you think?

Everyone flies except the hubby and by extension the Queen (me)! As we prepared for this trip I pressed Junior about what I perceived to be his fear of flying. He explained that was not it at all. "I want to be in control!" he says!

Huh, it's been a long time since I thought I was in control of anything

### This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



anyway. But I have a friend whose son is a pilot and she dislikes flying for the same reason! Must be a Type-A Personality thing!

Daughter Kate just purchased a new Jeep so she agreed to drive us. I spent hours mapping out our route, planning what to take, obtaining passports, the proper cell phone calling plan and warning the credit card companies we would be in a foreign country!

Best paid plans---not all goes according to script. Didn't I say I know I'm not in control? The credit card company freaked the first time a charge went through in Canada.

The cell phone deal was interesting. Several of us have phones with the same company. We all got different explanations about how it would work or even if it would work. I even got three different explanations from three different service reps. I just kept calling until someone told me what I wanted to hear! Sure hope it

ends up working better than the credit card deal!

I honestly had not thought about the exchange rate but the Canadians are good neighbors. Most places do whatever they can to work with you.

The miles versus kilometers was also something I never took into account but it worked to our advantage. We were delayed due to traffic the first day of our trip not making as good a time as we anticipated. Once we got into Canada and realized we were dealing with kilometers not miles our trip got shorter! Speed limits are generally lower than in the states, but the roads are excellent.

I over packed for the trip. We do not travel enough; I cannot figure out how to dress unless I have at least five pairs of shoes.

Kate's new ride is comfy but cargo space is at a premium. As we drove along she would scope out shopping. I feared for my wardrobe. If we took on more, something would have to be jettisoned!

That no shopping thing remained a hard and fast rule until we found a quilt shop. If we have to leave a pair of shoes behind so be it!

And much as I like quilts even those are just things.

The greatest thing is family, eh!!!

## Business as usual in the race for the presidency

Remember Dick Morris? You know the on again/off again Clinton friend, political author, commentator who has worked both sides? Well, he called last night. Well, not really him it was a recording promoting his book and wanting my input on the list of potential GOP candidates. The ones who would work to abolish the socialist Obama health care plan, his pro-Muslim agenda and Clintonesque ways. After the 60 second promo, I was subjected to a short piece of dramatic music before being connected to a real person. She continued the tirade against Obama focusing on the incredible "huge debt" he has put upon us. At that point I was asked to donate to the Dick Morris fund and receive a "free" autographed copy of his book with my \$100 donation.

This is when I said I thought Obama was doing a pretty good job and I didn't

### Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



have any real complaints about his performance. She said, rather cynically, "Oh, so you are a Democrat."

I replied, "Well, I have a hard time understanding how potential GOP candidates can place the blame for the huge deficit on Obama. He inherited a nearly \$500 billion budget shortfall in 2008 from former President George W. Bush. Bush took office with a \$40 billion budget surplus, but the initiation of two wars, on money borrowed from China, left us with

a huge deficit. Several billion dollars a month in defense spending contributed mightily to this huge debt so it seems important that we realize this isn't only Obama's debt. The debt which you are attributing to Obama actually had its origin in George W."

She hung up. The Dick Morris robo call had no suggestions to help our country, only attacks. She couldn't or wouldn't discuss issues, she merely made threats and accusations. I would like to think this would be the exception rather than the rules of engagement for the 2012 election, but I'm not so naive as to believe either party will resort to meaningful conversation. With the possibility of Palin and Bachman in the race, the chance of debating the issues seems pretty unlikely. Thanks, Dick, you confirmed my suspicions it will be business as usual. mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

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