



from our viewpoint...

Scottish bagpipes add to service

The weather was clear and warm for the Memorial Day service at Goodland Cemetery on Monday, and the stiff wind kept the flags fluttering and flapping for the wonderful service put on by the Goodland Veterans of Foreign Wars, Women's Auxiliary and American Legion.

The sound of Scottish bagpipes added to the program played by Richard Gannon, former Goodland resident who lives in Topeka and works for the Kansas Press Association. Gannon had said he had been asked to play when we saw him at the KPA convention at Junction City.

Fred Hall said Gannon learned to play the 'pipes' for his daughter's wedding several years ago. Gannon said he has the history on the set of pipes and they were made in 1947 by Grainger and Campbell, the company closed in 1989. The pipes were owned by a member of the Royal Air Force, and then went to a member of the Scottish Guards who were the palace guards. Gannon said in the history is a photo of the bagpipe player shaking hands with Princess Margaret when he was stationed at the palace.

It was good to see Danny Mangus playing at the service and with Dani handling the music for the Kanorado and Brewster services. Danny broke his hand a year ago, and had an infection that made it hard for him to play the guitar. His rendition of "God Bless the U.S.A." is always great to hear and the crowd stood up with him.

The whole Memorial Weekend was filled with meeting many old friends as we made the trip to Lamar on Saturday to decorate family graves. That was an important trip this year as we added another grave to the family list with the death in September of our father, Fred M. Betz, Jr., giving us seven graves in Fairmount Cemetery.

While working on the flower arrangements a number of old family friends stopped by to chat, and we had some of the same conversations with friends on Monday morning after the Memorial Day service.

Memorial Day was first established in 1866 when the ladies in Columbus, Miss., decided to decorate the graves of those who had died in the Civil War decorating both Union and Confederate graves at Friendship Cemetery.

The recent trip by three Goodland World War II veterans to Washington, D.C., reminded us about the dwindling number of those who fought in the "great war," and included our father who served in the U.S. Navy from 1944-1947.

Last year there were 400,000 World War II veterans left in the U.S., and about 100,000 of those died in the year.

It was good to see more of the young people attending on Monday. These services are meant for everyone, and today we have more ways to honor soldiers from and the best guess is even if we get out of Iraq and Afghanistan there will be needs for servicemen and women to be ever vigilant to the defense of our country.

With each war seem to find new injuries or sometimes new names for old wounds we have learned more about over the years. We do not see Agent Orange in Iraq or Afghanistan, but we see modern versions of what was once called battle fatigue or shell shock. Today we know it as Traumatic Brain Injury and a related one is Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome.

We hope everyone enjoyed the weekend and took time to remember family and friends who have died over the years, and stopped to listen to the music and playing of taps in remembrance of those who have served and died for the country and those who continue to serve in the armed forces. — Tom Betz



The FUTURE

First grandchild receives high school diploma

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. Josephs 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 Master 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 class-

tom dreiling

• man of the plains



mates 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 posturing 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.

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The big jet's problems should have been a sign for us, I guess. Not a good one.

The Airbus had spent the night in Augusta, Ga., normally the home of tiny, cramped "regional jets" that ply air commuter routes for lines called "Connection" or "Express."

By big, I mean a 320 model, about the size of a Boeing 737. Not a big airliner by today's standards, but it looked pretty big in Augusta.

One of the ground-crew guys said starting about a week before, the Airbus was Delta's last flight out of Atlanta to Augusta at night and first flight back in the morning. Many days, it's full, he said, so who knows. Delta has tried bigger planes in Augusta before.

"But this one has problems," he added, nodding at the gate. "Should have been gone 10 minutes ago."

Indeed, ground crew members were commiserating with the pilots as we talked.

I wandered over to the other gate, where our U.S. Airways Express ("Operated by Air Wisconsin") flight was about to board. Only the gate crew didn't seem to be in much of a hurry. Finally, they let us out on the ramp and we gate-checked our "carry-on" bags. No way we were cramming those oversized "rollies" into the tiny overhead bins of that little jet.

Time came to leave - 7:10 a.m. - and time passed. Nothing happened. Finally, the pilot came on the intercom. Charlotte had heavy ground fog, he said, and so with the possibility of circling while it cleared, they took on more

steve haynes

• along the sappa



fuel. Only the crew overfilled the plane, and now it was too heavy.

"Weight is an issue," he said dryly. "I'm not sure why they overfilled it, but we had to call another fuel truck to take some off. They say that might take half an hour. But then we might have to wait for Charlotte to clear up before they let us take off."

Anyway, we taxied out on to the ramp. Delta was ahead of us, so I presumed that Atlanta wasn't doing much better than Charlotte. We parked behind the Airbus.

The airlines, it seems have taken to heart the new federal regulations - and fines - for holding people on the ramp forever against their will.

Sara Jane, our cabin attendant, began serving coffee and juice to the passengers. One asked to be let off so he could either walk to Charlotte, only about 165 miles away, or take another airline, whichever was faster.

In fact, we calculated later, we could have driven faster. But we didn't have a car, and our daughter Felicia, who had gotten up at 5:45 a.m. and put on slippers to drive us to the airport, wasn't likely to take us to Charlotte.

A few minutes later, the pilot announced that he was going back to the terminal to let the guy off who wanted to walk. The woman ahead of us said brightly that she'd like to get off, too. Sara Jane had to explain that she wouldn't be able to get back on if she did.

Anyway, the pilot said by the time we'd finished that, Charlotte ought to be able to take us. At the gate, an agent came on and noted that many of us were going to miss our connections. And we'd thought an hour and a half was plenty of time for breakfast and a stroll in Charlotte.

The agent said he'd start rebooking us on later flights. We left about 2 hours, 20 minutes down, and when we got to North Carolina, the computer in fact showed us with seats on 11:50 a.m. flight to Denver, rather than 9:23. I'd say that agent did a great job, rebooking 50 or so of us that morning - at the same time people from 20-30 flights into Charlotte had to be reconnected.

(We've had worse days flying. The time we hit a blizzard in Denver comes to mind. We got the last plane out that day, but our luggage spent the weekend in the Bahamas while we went to Park City, Utah.)

By the time we hit Denver this time still two hours down, we went about our business, bought fried chicken, apples and bread for a picnic on the plains and hit the road for home.

I sure hope those Delta people got to Atlanta OK.

Jet problems lead to flight delays