



A Few Elusive Words

BY KELLY HERTZ

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This is so damn hard. As I try to attach some words to my feelings on the passing of Hod Nielsen, I keep wishing that I could be doing anything else. I really don't want to face this loss, which hurts more than most. I just do not want to say good-bye.

It's also difficult because, how do you capture Hod's life, his deeds and his spirit in the space of a few paragraphs. Where do you even start? There are so many places to jump in.

I could tell you that Hod was a man of words, and good words at that. He was a sports writer who had seen it all and had covered it all. He was a radio broadcaster who had described it all. He could convey joy, passion and anger in plainspoken terms, and he could make any kid who was the subject of his praise feel like a champion. However, he always cited as his claim to journalistic fame the fact that, as editor of the YHS *Woksape*, he gave future author Bob Karolevitz his first writing assignment (probably for no pay, thus adhering to a longstanding journalistic tradition).

I could tell you that Hod was a genuinely iconic figure on the South Dakota sports scene. How many games did we attend together where he knew all the officials working those games and most of the coaches? He won both sports writer- and sportscaster-of-the-year honors, and he's in practically every hall of fame that's ever existed. None of that was by accident.

I could tell you that Hod was a consummate sports fan, which came from being an athlete at heart. As a USD Coyote, he was a 140-pound lineman who once played in a football game called the Prune Bowl. He was also on hand to witness the Coyotes defeated Minnesota in football a couple of years ago. He really saw it all.

However, of all the days and all the tales that made up Hod's considerable life, I want to talk about a September afternoon about 20 years ago. The two of us had gone to Vermillion to cover a USD football game, and on the way back, we made small talk about a few inconsequential football topics.

But then we started talking about the war. Hod had never said much to me about his World War II experiences, and I was fine with that. But I was always curious, and on this day, when the topic came up, he began to open up just a bit.

Before the war even started, Hod entered the service and was trained as a pilot, and he was eventually recruited into a new endeavor in photo reconnaissance. He was part of a group whose missions involved flying over occupied Europe and taking photos in order to update the working maps that the Allies had of the continent. (He was a forerunner of Google Earth, you might say, back when Google was simply a character in the comics pages.) The maps that existed, Hod explained, hailed back from the Napoleonic era.



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Obviously, things had changed somewhat since. His missions involved flying a stripped-down, unarmed P-38 airplane (the guns were removed to accommodate the cameras) over hostile territory, gather those photos and return the film safely to England. As Hod told me, no mission was considered a success if the film didn't make it back, even if the crew did. That's called wartime prioritization.

Survival sometimes called for extraordinary tactics. When flying on a northern run, he would occasionally be chased by German aircraft chattering away with their guns. Otherwise defenseless, pilots like Hod knew a trick: They would fly out over the frigid waters of the North Sea (I believe; my recollection on this point is not clear). The Germans wouldn't follow them because, if a plane went down in that icy water, the pilot would die within minutes. Thus, pilots like Hod literally leapt into the jaws of death to escape with their lives — and, of course, with that film. (Not all the pilots made it back: According to Hod's obituary, only seven members of his 27-man squad survived.)

Hod was in England until the spring of 1944 when he was suddenly shipped to the states. He said he was never informed why until a year later, when he was told that, if his plane had gone down on a mission and he were captured and "compelled" to talk, he might have given away the invasion site for D-Day. He didn't specifically KNOW the site, he said, but interrogators might have been able to figure it out. Maybe that's one reason why Hod never talked very much about his war experiences.

This conversation 20 years ago changed the way I looked at Hod. In the years thereafter, the topic of the war came up again sometimes, especially after Tom Brokaw featured him in the best-selling book, "The Greatest Generation." Hod eventually told me about other soldiers and about a brother who was killed in the war. He revealed to me a man that few people probably knew, but now, it's the one I remember most.

Hod's flying experiences never left him. A few years ago, he said there were still times when he dreamed about flying a P-38 above pillowy clouds in a universe of indescribable peace. He sometimes wished he could know that feeling just one more time, he told me. So today, I think I know *precisely* what his spirit is doing.

Hod was a warrior, a writer, a husband, a father, a sportsman, a builder of a post-war world, a pillar in his community and a credit to his profession. Far down on that list, he was also my friend and mentor, a fact of which I am very proud.

While searching for those elusive words now, I can only come up with this ineloquent passage: He gave so much more than he took. But really, what higher praise could any person hope to earn when the final line is written?

You can follow Kelly Hertz on Twitter at twitter.com/kelly_hertz

A Great Time To 'Celebrate Women'

BY MICKI SCHIEVELBEIN

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On Thursday, April 18, the *Press & Dakotan* will be hosting our ninth annual Celebrate Women event, and it is going to be fantastic! The event will start with doors opening at the Riverfront Event Center at 4:30 p.m. so that our attendees can visit all of the great vendors that will be there.

From 5-7 p.m. guests can go upstairs for a delicious meal catered by our Yankton Hy-Vee. The menu consists of teriyaki chicken breast, baby red potatoes, Catalina mixed vegetables, mini croissants and cheesecake with a variety of toppings. It's going to be delicious.

Throughout the evening we encourage our guests to visit with our vendors. Along with our major sponsors: Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C., Yankton Hy-Vee and First Dakota National Bank we already have these businesses coming to share with products and services: Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, Linda's Angel Crossing, Premier Designs Jewelry, Celebrating Home, Osborne Books & More, Avon, Origami Owl, Scentsy, It Works, Nerium International, Just Jewelry, Body by Vi, Pampered Chef, Tupperware, Thirty-One, Tastefully Simple, KC Creations, Dove Chocolate Discoveries, Uppercase Living, Art Dee 'Signs, Seacret, Fifth Avenue Jewelry Collection, Ideal Weigh, Paparazzi Jew-



Micki
SCHIEVELBEIN

elry, Felt Passions, The Bag Lady, Norwex, Pure Romance, The Neat Freaks, Gerald's Handbags 'n Accessories and Jamberry Nails. With more to come!

At 7:30 p.m. all of the attendees are invited to the Lewis & Clark Theatre just down the street from the Riverfront Event Center. Once we are all at the theatre we will be giving away door prizes and introducing representatives from our three major sponsors.

Once that is done we will hear this year's featured speaker, South Dakota's own "Survivor," Holly Hoffman. Holly is back in Yankton at this event by popular demand. This year she will be sharing her message of Six Words of Survival: Attitude, Determination, Confidence, Desire, Faith and Perseverance. You definitely won't want to miss hearing Holly's message.

Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C., Yankton Hy-Vee, First Dakota National Bank and all of us here at the *Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan's* Her Voice magazine want to extend a heartfelt invitation for you to join us that evening for a night of fun, food, fellowship, shopping and inspiration. Advance tickets are available at Yankton Hy-Vee and the *Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan*. No tickets will be available at the door so get yours today. See you there!

Schievelbein is advertising director for Yankton Media, Inc.

to which we have dedicated so much of our lives. We were saddened that the negotiations process came to an abrupt end when the Yankton School Board declared impasse. We were disappointed when we were not provided with requested documents and information about fiscal matters, which prevented us from being able to make an informed decision regarding contractual matters.

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OPINION | WE SAY

Farewell, Hod



A terribly sad **THUMBS DOWN** to the passing of our dear friend Howard "Hod" Nielsen, who died Wednesday morning at age 92. Hod was a fixture here at the *Press & Dakotan* for decades, and it was only part of a storied career in the media that included years of state tournament basketball play-by-play on the radio. He was also the longtime voice of the Yankton Bucks, and played a big role in covering the University of South Dakota, Mount Marty College, Yankton College and Southern State College/University of South Dakota at Springfield. We will miss him terribly here. Even after retirement, he used to drop by the office a couple of times a week to catch up on things. We saw him less and less the last few years, and that absence was felt. Rest in peace, Hod. You had a very good life, indeed!

Mighty Accolade



THUMBS UP to Yankton native Colton Iverson for being named to the honorable mention All-American team in college basketball. Iverson just concluded a his career at Colorado State after transferring there from Minnesota, and he made the most of his opportunity. Iverson has moved on now to Las Vegas to prepare for what may be the next stage of his basketball career. Whatever the future holds, we wish him well. And we cannot emphasize enough how proud Yankton is of his accomplishments!

Hot Times



THUMBS DOWN to the return of an old, unwanted sign of spring: controlled burn season. More specifically, Thumbs Down to those people who don't call in their controlled burns before they ignite them. Given the oppressively dry conditions and the subsequent burn bans that devoured the area last year, the sight of smoke this spring is quite likely to ignite calls to local fire departments. (By the way, that's not really a bad thing, because it suggests that people are being vigilant.) The dry conditions haven't really improved much, and now warmer days and stronger winds are upon us. So use caution and think ahead. (As an aside, a weather system is expected to move into the area early next week that could bring some ample, much-needed rain to the area. Let's keep our fingers crossed.)

Thumbs Down



A sad **THUMBS DOWN** to the passing of movie critic Roger Ebert, who died Thursday at age 70 after fighting cancer. Ebert was a journalist who helped elevate movie criticism to an art, as evidenced by the fact that he was the first movie critic ever to win the Pulitzer Prize. He (along with his longtime partner in criticism, the late Gene Siskel, with who they famously gave "thumbs up" and "thumbs down" assessments) brought more than a dose of venom to his assessments. Ebert understood film history well and he was a master in the art of communication. But through it all, he loved his work because he loved the silver screen; he admitted he was a movie fan at heart. Despite health issues in recent years that cost him part of his jaw, he remained active in film criticism and became an avid used of social media. Ebert will be dearly missed.

OUR LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed.

■ Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

■ In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

■ Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

■ Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email to views@yankton.net.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, April 5, the 95th day of 2013. There are 270 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On April 5, 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order creating the Civilian Conservation Corps and an anti-hoarding order that effectively prohibited private ownership of gold.

On this date: In 1614, Pocahontas, daughter of the leader of the Powhatan tribe, married English colonist John Rolfe in Virginia. (A convert to Christianity, she went by the name Lady Rebecca.)

In 1621, the Mayflower sailed from Plymouth Colony in present-day Massachusetts on a monthlong return trip to England.

In 1792, President George Washington cast his first veto, rejecting a congressional measure for apportioning representatives among the states.

In 1862, during the Civil War, the monthlong Siege of Yorktown began in Virginia.

In 1887, in Tusculum, Ala., Anne Sullivan achieved a breakthrough as her blind and deaf pupil, Helen Keller, learned the meaning of the word "water" as spelled out in the Manual Alphabet.

In 1895, Oscar Wilde lost his criminal libel case against the Marquess of Queensberry, who'd accused the writer of homosexual practices.

In 1951, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were sentenced to death following their conviction in New York on charges of conspiring to commit espionage for the Soviet Union.

In 1964, Army General Douglas MacArthur died in Washington at age 84.

In 1976, reclusive billionaire Howard Hughes died in Houston at age 70.

In 1986, two American servicemen and a Turkish woman were killed in the bombing of a West Berlin discotheque, an incident which prompted a U.S. air raid on Libya more than a week later.

In 1987, Fox Broadcasting Co. made its prime-time TV debut by airing a total of three times the premiere episode of "Married... with Children" followed by "The Tracey Ullman Show."

In 1988, a 15-day hijacking ordeal began as gunmen forced a Kuwait Airways jumbo jet to land in Iran.

Ten years ago: U.S. officials declared a near chokehold on the Iraqi capital Baghdad even while warning that many other parts of Iraq were not yet under allied control. A prison riot in northern Honduras left 69 inmates dead and dozens injured.

Five years ago: President George W. Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin opened farewell talks at Putin's heavily wooded retreat on the Black Sea. Actor Charlton Heston, big-screen hero and later leader of the National Rifle Association, died in Beverly Hills, Calif., at age 84.

One year ago: President Barack Obama signed bipartisan jobs legislation intended to help small businesses and make it easier for startups to raise capital. Ferdinand Alexander Porsche, 76, grandson of the automaker's founder who developed the Porsche 911, died in Salzburg, Austria. Jim Marshall, 88, the man behind the amplifier that guitarists like Jimi Hendrix, Pete Townshend of The Who, and Eric Clapton — used to create ear-shattering sounds in the 1960s, died in London. Barney McKenna, 72, the last original member of the Irish folk band The Dubliners, died in Dublin.

Today's Birthdays: Movie producer Roger Corman is 87. Country music producer Cowboy Jack Clement is 82. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell is 76. Country singer Tommy Cash is 73. Actor Michael Moriarty is 72. Pop singer Allan Clarke (The Hollies) is 71. Writer-director Peter Greenaway is 71. Actor Max Gail is 70. Actress Jane Asher is 67. Singer Agnetha Faltskog (ABBA) is 63. Actor Mitch Pileggi is 61. Singer-songwriter Peter Case is 59. Rock musician Mike McCready (Pearl Jam) is 47. Country singer Troy Gentry is 46. Singer Paula Cole is 45. Actress Krista Allen is 42. Country singer Pat Green is 41. Rapper-producer Pharrell Williams is 40.

Thought for Today: "If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?" — John Wooden, basketball Hall of Famer (1910-2010).

FROM THE BIBLE

I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever. John 14:16. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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