

Life In Poetry

Poet Writes About Ordinary Objects

BY TED KOOSER
 U.S. Poet Laureate

I love writing poems about the most ordinary of things, and was envious, indeed, when I found this one by Michael McFee, who lives in North Carolina. How I wish I'd written it.

SALTINE

How well its square
 fit my palm, my mouth,
 a toasty wafer slipped
 onto the sick tongue
 or into chicken soup,
 each crisp saltine a tile
 pierced with 13 holes
 in rows of 3 and 2,
 its edges perforated
 like a postage stamp,
 one of a shifting stack
 sealed in wax paper
 whose noisy opening
 always signaled *snack*,
 peanut butter or cheese
 thick inside Premiums,
 the closest we ever got
 to serving *hors d'oeuvres*:
 the redneck's hardtack,
 the cracker's cracker.

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Avera

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patients, but they may not have the data to support those claims," Pam Rezac, ASHH president/CEO, told the *Press & Dakotan*. "By utilizing Healthgrades, the public can have the confidence that the designation of ASHH for the awards were received is based on evidence-based data."

Healthgrades independently measures hospitals based on data that is submitted to the federal government. No hospital can opt in or out of the analysis, and no hospital gets paid to be measured.

Rezac noted that staff members are gratified to have won such awards, and receiving them is a testament to the high quality of services staff members provide patients and visitors on a daily basis.

"Consumers should have confidence in the evidence-based data, and the fact that Avera Sacred Heart is one of only two hospitals in South Dakota, and 86 in the nation, to have earned the distinctions," she said. "The awards should also be significant to the people we serve in Yankton and the region, in that they can have confidence that they are receiving top-in-the-nation quality care and customer service."

Rezac added that she's proud of the employees, medical staff and volunteers at Avera Sacred Heart. "The people we have make an amazing contribution and signifi-

cant difference in the lives of the people we serve," she said. "Our staff are focused on providing the best evidence-based care and safe environment to our patients."

The Healthgrades report highlights the variation in hospital quality across the nation.

"The goal of the report is to show consumers that spending time on understanding hospital performance can be a matter of life and death," Evan Marks, executive vice president of informatics and strategy for Healthgrades, said in a statement. "Consumers can be assured that a hospital that has been recognized with a 2013 Healthgrades patient safety excellence award had demonstrated an established commitment to patient safety."

Rezac said officials at Avera intend to continuously promote evidence-based health care best practices.

"We devote significant resources to the orientation and continuing education of our staff to assure optimum patient-centered high quality care and a safe environment," she said. "We will continue to submit our clinical data and pursue surveys of our patients and residents to obtain information to ensure we are providing the best possible care to the people we serve."

To read a full copy of the report, visit healthgrades.com.

You can follow Andrew Atwal on Twitter at twitter.com/andrewatwal

Air Deflectors Aren't Vital For Cars

BY TOM AND RAY MAGLIOZZI
 King Features Syndicate

Dear Tom and Ray:
 There once was a black plastic thingamajig hanging under the front end of our Mercury Grand Marquis, right behind the front bumper. We could almost always hear it scrape against concrete parking blocks in parking lots. Recently, it was partially torn away by a parking block. Einstein, aka my husband, who knows nothing about cars except how to put gas in the tank and air in the tires, tore away the rest of it. He claims that it is not needed and that we will get better gas mileage without it. I say that the automotive engineers probably put it there for a reason and that it should be replaced. What say you? Do you know what that thingamajig is and why it was there, and is it OK to leave it off? Oh, and does your brother agree with your response? —**Betty**

RAY: I'm afraid old Einstein is half right, Betty. Maybe he would have come up with "e = mc + 3" or something. He's close.

TOM: What broke off is an air deflector. It's a cheap, plastic device that directs air underneath the car in order to improve mileage.

RAY: So he's wrong about getting better mileage without it (although maybe you'll get better mileage than with it hanging halfway off). But he's right that you don't really need the thing.

TOM: A primary principle of aerodynamics



CAR TALK

Tom and Ray Magliozzi

is "the smoother, the better." You want to reduce air turbulence. In terms of shapes that do that, think of an airplane, or a bullet. Because when air passes over something smoothly, it creates less drag than if interrupted by baffles and edges.

RAY: Since there are some hard edges and odd-shaped parts under the bumper and at the front of the lower engine compartment, the manufacturer covered them up with a cheap piece of plastic, to send the air under the car instead of right into that stuff.

TOM: Does it make a big difference in your mileage? No. It's only a factor at higher speeds.

stated. "They've worked their tails off to keep the water flowing."

Under the proposed facilities plan being considered by the Yankton City Commission, Plant No. 1 would no longer be used for water treatment. However, the office and shop areas within it would still be utilized.

As improvements proceed for Plant No. 2, one of the major undertakings will be replacing elements of the lime softening system.

The augers that transport lime to a blower are worn out, as is the blower itself.

"If that blower goes out, this plant is 100 percent out of commission," Goodman said. "We have no other way to get the lime to the lime slaker. We had to take the augers and put a bigger wheel on them to slow them down, because the blower can't keep up with what it used to do."

He said the new design includes two blowers so there is some redundancy.

Updating computer technology will also be a goal of the upgrade to Plant No. 2, along with a variety of other nagging issues brought on by age.

LIME OR MEMBRANE?

Lime or membrane? That is a question the City of Yankton is still wrestling with when it comes to the possibility of building a new plant.

A lime softening plant would cost less to build up front. However, Goodman believes a membrane softening plant would be more cost-effective over time.

"The membrane treatment is a newer technology that puts out a cleaner, better water," he said. "It's similar to pushing water through a coffee filter. It doesn't require the

chemicals we currently add that cause disinfection byproducts."

Should stricter drinking water standards be enacted in the future, Goodman said membrane softening would put the city in a better position to meet them.

It could also assist with economic development efforts, he added.

"You can put out a water that is super-purified and can be utilized for certain industrial uses where they need really clean water," Goodman said. "It gives us the ability for some economic growth that other communities wouldn't have."

Membrane treatment makes it much easier to expand capacity in the future, as well.

"If you want to add another million gallons per day, you just add on to the building, bring in more membranes and you're up and running with another million gallons," Goodman said. "It's much more difficult to add on to a conventional system."

However, he does believe there are also drawbacks to a membrane system.

"When you have a membrane facility, you have to automate it" because there are so many membranes that have to be backwashed approximately every 15 minutes to keep them clean, Goodman said. "That means power usage goes up and you need bigger generators. That's the way technology is going. It's one thing that makes me nervous about a membrane system."

Once the city knows what water source it will be using in the future — a collector well, B-Y Water or some other avenue — plans for the new water plant can be finalized.

In order to meet the projected water demand for 2015, the city tentatively aims to have the new facility operational by the summer of that year.

Ideally, Goodman said the intake and treatment issues could be addressed individually. However, that's not an option.

"It's basically two separate projects. It's the intake and the treatment plant," he stated. "I kind of wish we were doing them separately with a few years between them so we were educating the public and selling them on one project at a time. However, with the time constraints of our projected water demand, we have to keep the project moving."

WEDNESDAY: What are the options for paying for an estimated \$28 million in water system improvements, and how could they affect Yankton residents?

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at [Twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage](https://twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage)

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SCHOLASTICS

MEG HENRICKSON

Concordia College speech competitors placed 15th in the overall school competition at the American Forensic Association's National Individual Events tournament hosted April 5-8 by Hutchinson Community College, Hutchinson, Kan.

A total of 80 institutions qualified students for the national tournament.

Local student Meg Henrickson, the daughter of Andrew and Teresa Henrickson, Yankton, was one of 13 Concordia students who qualified for the national tournament.

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The Ideal Weigh Expansion Ribbon Cutting

The Yankton Chamber of Commerce Ambassador Committee hosted an Expansion Ribbon Cutting for The Ideal Weigh, Inc. at their new location, 329 Broadway Ave. Ste. 1. Kathy Bertsch, owner and Brenda Roth, manager invite you to stop in and see their new home and learn about the healthy weight loss method with proven long lasting results along with nutritional information. If you would like to talk to one of their personal coaches or to find out their hours of operation call (605)689-1234 or email: yankton@idealweighcenters.com or their website: www.idealweighcenters.com

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