

# Talking About Nothing, Again...

BY TOBIN BARNES

Nope, there will be no more discussion about the global war on terror from this guy. After spending three weeks nattering on about something with which I'm only vaguely familiar and totally unqualified to comment upon, I have decided to come back to my roots. That's right. I'm going to talk about nothing in particular...again. Like usual.

It's not that serious substance doesn't suit me—I think I made as good a case on that deeply important global problem as any other blathering idiot—it's just that solemn, well-intentioned analysis hardly ever makes any difference anyway. So why bother?

After all, nothing ever really happens until there's some mind-blowing crisis that can't be swept under the rug and simply ignored like everything else. It's the modus operandi of human kind throughout history. Emotion trumps analysis every time.

Nope, I'm going back to writing about nothing in particular—at least for a while.

Yeah, nothing in particular like what a cold, rotten, stormy winter it's been.

There. Enough said about that one. Who wants to hear anymore?

Hey, this nothing-in-particular stuff is easier than I remember.

And, let's see, other nothings in particular, such as my puppy getting a really rare, weird disease and dying after getting to live for only four months. Uh huh, it was a bummer. Scout was a good little dog with a lot of potential.

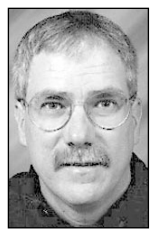
And it's sad.

We've talked about this kind of stuff before. How when compared to the mass of misery out there needing to be documented and grieved and addressed, we sometimes get caught up in little tragedies that might better be quickly passed over and given little regard—little tragedies like the grossly premature death of a puppy.

That little loss is a mere drop in the ocean of the global suffering that takes place every day. Therefore, it's hardly remarkable in comparison.

But, nevertheless, I mention it anyway. Little tragedies make an impact, too, just like little joys. Actually, they are much of what life is made of. If it were all big stuff, good and bad, we couldn't cope.

So I think I'll treasure my little bouts of sadness and joy and pass on the big ones; that is, if



Barnes

it's a matter of choice, which I highly doubt.

And some more recent nothings in particular...?

How about trying to lose weight, a theme that touches

most of us?

As for me, it's been so far so good. I'm about twenty-five pounds less than I was this time last year. I guess that's one of those little joys I was talking about.

But as we've often been told by the media, the process of losing weight and then keeping it off, statistically, is likely to be a failure. Now that certainly qualifies as a little sadness.

That's right. Most people can't keep the weight off that they've struggled mightily to take off. In other words, taking it off is easier than keeping it off.

Huh.

When I talked about this subject last summer, I was approaching a total weight loss of nearly twenty pounds. I said at the time that after all the effort it took, I shouldn't weigh a mere twenty pounds less. I should weigh only twenty pounds, period. That's what the effort feels like.

Yeah, it's a job, an everyday grind, and, admittedly, things have slowed down this fall and winter. As I said, I'm now at a twenty-five pound weight loss, total, only five more pounds than last summer.

The cause of the weight-loss slowdown must be my caveman genes. It's like I need to preserve some bulk like our ancestors to survive the life-threatening winter. But like the appendix, this latent characteristic no longer does us much good.

It's one of nature's cruel jokes. Ha, ha, I can almost see some humor. My genes are making me work as hard now just to keep weight off as I was when I was losing it.

But then on the bright side, I'm not gaining weight as I statistically should be, which is an unqualified little joy.

If only this and a few other little joys could continue. That would certainly be more than nothing in particular.

Tobin's website: <http://tobin.barnes.blogspot.com>

**Tobin Barnes, a high school English teacher, gets his skewed viewpoints of life from staring too much at Crow Peak, which looms above his home a few miles outside Spearfish.**

# Tom And Ray Say No To Dangerous Idea

BY TOM AND RAY MAGLIOZZI

**Dear Tom and Ray:**  
My problem is my 1995 Chevy High-Top Conversion Van model G20. I am a fanatical sports fan. I never miss a football or baseball game. I also do a lot of RV-ing, so I spend a lot of time on the road. My RV van has a TV screen for the second and third row of passengers. In order to indulge both my sports and RV hobbies at the same time, I have set up a large mirror on the seat back of the second row so that it reflects the image on the TV. Then I adjust my rearview mirror so that I can see the TV image reflected on the large mirror behind me. This way, I never miss a touchdown play or game-winning home run while I am driving. My problem is that since the conversion from analog to digital TV, I can no longer enjoy the games. I have been unable to find a 12-volt digital converter for the TV. Can you help me? — Art



CLICK & CLACK

your gas mileage.

**RAY:** We can't help you with this, Art. I mean, we can, but we won't.

**TOM:** The reason we won't is to keep you from killing yourself or some other innocent people on the road.

**RAY:** Unless that's part of the plan, Art. In which case, while you're doing time for vehicular homicide, you can watch all the games you

want in the prison common room.

**TOM:** Of course, you'll have to fight off all those sex offenders who want to control the remote.

**RAY:** This is a bad idea, Art. When you're watching TV, you're not watching the road. And at 70 mph, you're traveling 100 feet per second! What happens when there's a 95-yard touchdown interception? You could run over six or eight Smart Cars.

**TOM:** Get yourself a Sirius XM satellite radio receiver for the van instead. They've got packages that provide live radio feeds for every baseball and football game. Listening while you drive is a lot safer than watching — as long as you don't spike your Mountain Dew Slurpee into the windshield when your team scores.

*Do you really need that truck if you only make one trip to the lumberyard per year? Find out what kind of car NOT to get in Tom and Ray's pamphlet "Should I Buy, Lease, or Steal My Next Car?" Send \$4.75 (check or money order) to Next Car, P.O. Box 336475, Orlando, FL 32833-6475.*

**Got a question about cars? Write to Click and Clack in care of this newspaper, or e-mail them by visiting the Car Talk Web site at [www.cartalk.com](http://www.cartalk.com).**

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# KYB Earns Visionary Membership To SAPA

**JULIE PERAKSLIS, DIRECTOR**  
Keep Yankton Beautiful

Keep Yankton Beautiful (KYB) is proud to have earned a Visionary membership from SAPA this past week.

John Clifton, SAPA's General Manager said "we believe that everyone benefits from a clean and beautiful Yankton. We agree that how a community looks directly impacts economic development in attracting new business and in keeping a strong and stable workforce here in Yankton. We support these initiatives and we support this community. We're proud to be a Visionary member and to contribute to the ongoing progress and efforts of KYB. We've been supportive in the past and know KYB has made a lot of progress. We hope our continued support helps KYB grow and further their mission."

This award is a great start to our annual membership drive and our goal to get strong community and individual involvement in our mission.

We are stewards of our environment and our mission is to motivate citizens to take greater responsibility for improving it,



SUBMITTED PHOTO

**Julie Perakslis, director of Keep Yankton Beautiful was recently presented with a check from Sapa as part of earning a Visionary membership to the company. Pictured are Tom Nelson, KYB President, Perakslis and John Clifton, Sapa plant manager.**

as well as enhancing the beauty of our city through litter prevention, waste reduction, and beautification projects. To that end, we are so grateful to SAPA for their support and for "believing" investing in the community is an investment in ourselves."

We are also very grateful to all of you have supported us over the last 10 years in memberships, partnerships, donations and volunteer hours.

In 2009 we logged 3,300 volunteer hours for the Great American Cleanup, Missouri River Cleanup, Cigarette Litter Prevention Program, International Coastal Cleanup and the Hazardous Household Waste Collection.

Every \$1 spent returned an average of \$10 to the community. We also logged 3,500 hours in Educational Programs and 3,000+ hours in beautification projects. None of this could have been

achieved without the support and commitment of the City of Yankton, our members, donors, sponsors and volunteers, or the companies and organizations we partnered with.

As we look to the future and expanding our beautification programs, including continued work on Highway 50, educational programs, electronic waste, recycling support, litter prevention programs and expanding into Yankton County, we need your support.

We hope you will be interested in joining our planning committees to help us achieve these goals.

We will be running a membership form in the *Press & Dakotan* on Wednesday, Feb. 10, Saturday, Feb. 13 and Tuesday, Feb. 16 for your convenience.

You can also call us at (605) 838-0665 (must dial the 605, but it is a local call) or e-mail at [info@keepyanktonbeautiful.org](mailto:info@keepyanktonbeautiful.org) to have membership materials sent to you, or if you have any questions, suggestions or ideas.

We also want to thank Brad Dykes who is retiring from Hy-Vee this week and who has been a tremendous support to Keep Yankton Beautiful over the years.

## IRENE-WAKONDA HONOR ROLL

**A HONOR ROLL**

**Seniors:** Casey Hessman, Kari Rye, Zach Sorenson

**Juniors:** Ann Brockmueller, Candace Merchen, Liz Nutley, Lea Schaefer, Carly Wilson

**Sophomores:** Melissa Hessman, Haley Hinseth, Morgan Lee

**Freshmen:** Mackenzie Huber

**8th Grade:** Preston Larson, Justin Ostrem, Michael Saffel

**7th Grade:** Skyler Heings, Jessica Johnson

**B HONOR ROLL**

**Seniors:** Dylan Hauger, Justin Polley, Tate Schroeder, Dan Sokolowski

**Juniors:** Alysa Buzard, Holly Schenk, Chelsey Steffen

**Sophomores:** Scott Davis, Pearl Gaidelis, Dustin Knutson, Lauren Mews, Cash Murphy, Luke Schroeder, Sam Smith, Tucker Sorenson

**Freshmen:** Dillon Buchanan, Jeremy Davis, Jessica Djurkowsitch, Lucas Gustad, Trevor Hansen, Jamie Healy, Chris Heirigs, Trisha Kathol, Maggie Kribell, Dustin Livingston, Jake Vollmer

**8th Grade:** Rainy Brewer Nysven, Daniel Brue, Bailey Hinseth, Kevin Hinseth, Josie Huber, Sydney Nielsen, Ashleigh Schroeder, Sheyanne Sorenson

**7th Grade:** Allyson Gartner, Calla Harper, Stephanie Hauger, Jack Johnson, Amy Morman, Matt Nelson, Chloe Nielsen, Lauren Sokolowski

## COYOTE COMMITMENT AWARD

**VERMILLION** — Area high school graduates enrolling in The University of South Dakota in the fall of 2010 are among the recipients of The University's prestigious Coyote Commitment awards.

Presented annually to academically talented high school graduates, the Coyote Commitment provides renewable, scholarship assistance for incoming students for up to four years of enrollment at USD.

Funded by the USD Foundation through various scholarship donors, the Coyote Commitment is part of more than \$5.3 million in annual scholarships awarded by the USD Foundation to The University of South Dakota undergraduate and graduate students.

USD awarded Coyote Commitments to the following area freshmen for Fall 2010: Karley Boecker, Amanda Janssen and Kristin Steffen of Crofton High School; Michaela Meiers of Avon High School; Timothy Norling of Centerville High School; Molly

Long and Chandler Hunt of Dakota Valley High School; Benjamin Staum of Elk Point-Jefferson High School; Scott Millar of Platte-Geddes High School; Jamie Konyek of Andes Central High School; Morgan Bialas of Parkston High School; Cole Andre, Elise Berheim, Steffani Donahoe, Lacey Leichtnam and Erik Ustad of Vermillion High School; Carrie Austin of Centerville High School; Rebecca Anderson and Nathan Glanzer of Viborg High School; Kayla Salonen, Kelsey Grosshuesch and Alex Hohenthauer of Yankton High School.

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