

American Life In Poetry

Pink Pantsuit Comes To Life

BY TED KOOSER
U.S. Poet Laureate

One of our first columns, published in 2005, had to do with a pair of high-heeled red shoes, and some trouble they brewed up, and now, at last, we have a pink pantsuit to go along with those dangerous pumps. This delightful poem is by Nancy Simpson, who lives in North Carolina.

PINK PANTSUIT

It hangs around the wardrobe
for days, dull,
or reclines in the hamper
like a flattened flamingo.
I wash it in soft water.
I give it new life, and what thanks?
It walks out the door with my legs,
through the gate,
headed straight for the racetrack.

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County

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year term to fill out the remainder of Johnson's four-year term.

Johnson's resignation took effect Dec. 31 and capped off nine years on the commission. He has moved to Omaha for a job opportunity.

The County Commission read a resolution of appreciation for Johnson during a meeting last week. It cited the expertise he offered the county on land surveying, Yankton County Search and Rescue, civil engineering and technology, among other things. The resolution describes Johnson as "a hard-working county commissioner who performed his duties in a professional and responsible manner."

Commission Chairman Bruce Jensen said he often called upon Johnson for advice.

"We don't always agree on everything, but that's good," Jensen stated. "He had his opinion, and I had my opinion. He is going to be sorely missed. I appreciate everything you've done for us."

The nine years on the commission has been an education process, Johnson told his fellow commissioners.

"I feel like I've gotten more than I've given," he said. "I've tried to give everything I could, and I like to feel like I did a good job. I've gotten a wealth of experience from Yankton County. It's a great place. I tried very hard to stay here with the new position I took, but it wasn't a option. I'm always going to have ties to the county, and I feel like everyone I've met and worked with have become friends of mine."

"I appreciate everything everyone has done," Johnson added. "I will not be forgetting Yankton, and I will be around quite a bit to visit."

The County Commission meeting gets under way today at 3:30 p.m. in the Commission Chamber of the Yankton County Government Center located at 321 West Third Street, Yankton.

The first order of business will be to consider the applicants for Johnson's vacancy.

Other items include a resignation in the local Extension office, a South Dakota Broadband Initiative technology grant, the South Dakota Kayak Challenge, court room remodeling and reorganization of the commission for the new year.

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net/.

Turner

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open Monday as a regular workday, and court had been in session, Nogelmeier said. "There was magistrate court just finishing up when we received the word that we should leave the building (because of the gas smell)," he said.

However, the gas leak didn't harm any employees or the general public using the courthouse, the sheriff said. "No one suffered (any) effects since the gas was on the outside of the building by the meter," he said.

A repairman was already responding Monday to the courthouse's furnace problems, according to Turner County emergency manager Brad Georgeson.

When the gas odor was detected, NorthWestern Energy — the town's natural-gas provider — and the Parker fire department were contacted about the leakage, Georgeson said.

"It ended up being a regulator issue for the natural gas," he said. "The main reason for the shutdown (of the courthouse) for the day was because of the heating issue in the building."

The heating concerns were compounded by the bitterly-cold weather conditions across the region.

According to the National Weather Service (NWS), Yankton and Lake Andes had recorded Monday wind-chill temperatures of 40 degrees below zero, while Vermillion hit 39 degrees below zero and Parkston reached 38 degrees below zero.

Georgeson, a part-time county official, had planned to work Monday in his courthouse office. However, he opted to work at home upon learning of the lack of heat in the county offices.

"I didn't go in when I got the message that the furnace

wasn't working right and they were using space heaters (in the courthouse)," he said.

Georgeson has become accustomed to working away from his office.

"I'm always pretty much 24/7 (as emergency manager)," he said. "I have got my cell phone with me, and I brought my laptop home with me and have been working at home."

Georgeson posted the courthouse evacuation and closure on his emergency manager's Facebook page, and he planned to provide an update about today's courthouse re-opening. In addition, he fielded media inquiries such as the *Press & Dakotan* and the *New Era* weekly newspaper in Parker.

Crime and calls for assistance don't take time off, and Nogelmeier said his department remained on duty as usual. But without access to the courthouse office, his staff couldn't accommodate routine business such as handling pistol permits.

The Turner County Courthouse closure didn't affect 911 and dispatching services, which are contracted with Lincoln County, Nogelmeier said.

The courthouse closure also didn't affect any prisoners, according to the sheriff's website.

Small Tires Advantageous

BY TOM AND RAY MAGLIOZZI
King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Dear Tom and Ray:

I'm going to buy a 2014 Ram Laramie pickup. I have a choice of 17-inch or 20-inch tires. I don't plan to drive off-road much, if at all. I do plan to drive several thousand miles around town and then perhaps 10,000 miles towing a travel trailer that weighs about 7,500 pounds. My thinking is that the 17-inch tires would weigh a lot less and so would provide better mileage around town. They also might be quieter rolling down the road. Another nice feature is that my wife and dog have short legs, so getting into and out of the truck will be easier. What I'm wondering is: What effect will the smaller tires have on mileage on the highway as I tow the trailer long distances at 65 mph? — Stewart

TOM: You'll get better mileage on the highway, too. I think you're right to lean toward the 17-inch wheels, Stewart. We're generally opposed to people supersizing their wheels. Or their french fries, for that matter.

RAY: Smaller wheel-tire combinations provide better mileage (city and highway), better acceleration and a quieter, more comfortable ride.

TOM: So why, you ask, would anyone give up all those things and pay extra to get ginormous wheels?

RAY: 'Cause they look cool! Have you seen those 20-inch bad boys on the Ram, Stewart? I was grunting and growing a forehead ridge after just a few hours of driving around with those.

TOM: The other reason people opt for larger wheels is that, up to a point,



CAR TALK

Tom and Ray Magliozzi

they can improve handling. Usually as a wheel gets larger, the tire's sidewall (or aspect ratio) gets smaller, so the total diameter of the wheel-tire combination stays about the same.

RAY: This is so the speedometer stays accurate and, more importantly, so the wheel-tire combination fits inside the wheel well and doesn't scrape!

TOM: And by the way, since the wheel-tire combination usually ends up being about the same size, your dog and wife might not get much help from the smaller wheels in terms of getting into the truck. Definitely get the running boards so that they have a step!

RAY: Or mount a large slingshot in your garage and launch them into the vehicle.

TOM: But in terms of cornering, when a tire has a shorter sidewall, it's stiffer, so you get less flexing from the tires on turns. That's how larger wheels improve handling.

RAY: But that same stiffness is what makes your overall ride harsher.

TOM: And the extra weight of the larger wheels is what cuts into your acceleration and fuel economy.

RAY: And here's one more strike against fancy, colossal wheels: Because of the shorter sidewalls of their tires, the rims are closer to the pavement, so they get bent and damaged more easily by potholes and curbstones.

TOM: The replacement cost for these larger wheels tends to send their poor owners into shock.

RAY: That's why we keep smelling salts next to every lift at the shop.

TOM: So my advice would be to have a look at the truck in both configurations. Sometimes, very small or very large wheels can look out of scale on a vehicle.

RAY: But if you're content with how the 17-inch wheels look on the Ram, that's what I'd go for. Happy travels.

Used cars can be a great bargain, and reliable, too! Find out why by ordering Tom and Ray's pamphlet "How to Buy a Great Used Car: Secrets Only Your Mechanic Knows." Send \$4.75 (check or money order) to Used Car, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475.

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Lunch

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schools' effort and called for changes to be made to the limits on grains, starches and proteins.

The USDA responded by lifting those limitations in late 2012, but only temporarily so it could monitor the effects of the changes.

"It definitely made it easier with how we didn't have to be so particular with the extra protein and grains we wanted to give them," Kramer said. "That was especially true for the elementary and middle school levels, because that was where we felt like we were really struggling."

She said the revisions not only offered more flexibility in planning meals, but also allowed her to give students items that were more filling instead of foods with "empty calories" to stay within the meat and grain limit.

"I haven't heard any of the kids saying that they feel like they're being cheated or anything now," Kramer said.

Seeing the positive effects the rule changes had on students, senators introduced the "Sensible School Lunch

Act," proposing to permanently loosen the requirements. The bill was co-sponsored by Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.).

Last Thursday, the USDA announced they were making the revisions permanent.

"I applaud USDA's decision to heed our concerns and give schools additional flexibility in meeting the serving requirements for grains and meats," Thune said in a news release. "Flexibility is needed to ensure schools continue to provide healthy meals and portions for students commensurate with varying activity levels."

Kramer added that, while she is pleased about the USDA's decision, she hopes that people don't get the wrong idea about the announcement.

"Hopefully people won't jump to the conclusion that there will be a lot of change, because a lot of schools have already been doing this, and we still have to stay within our calories," she said. "But it is a lot more relaxing now to know it's not temporary."

You can follow Derek Bartos on Twitter at twitter.com/d_bartos/. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net/.

Cold

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Even with this nostril-freezing cold, the family still prefers winter over summer.

"You can always put on more layers," she said. "When it gets hot, you can only take off so much."

For a big swath of the Midwest, the subzero cold moved in behind another winter wallop: more than a foot of snow and high winds that made traveling treacherous.

Nearly 3,200 flights — one out of every 10 domestic departures — were canceled Monday morning, following a weekend of travel disruption across the U.S. Airline officials said de-icing fluid was freezing, fuel was pumping sluggishly and ramp workers were having difficulty loading and unloading luggage.

Authorities in Indiana and Kentucky — where temperatures dropped into the single digits and below, with wind chills in the minus 20s and worse — warned people not to leave their homes at all unless they needed to go someplace safer.

Utility crews worked to restore power to more than 40,000 Indiana customers affected by the weekend storm and cautioned that some people could be in the cold and dark for days.

Ronald G. Smith Sr. took shelter at an Indianapolis Red Cross after waking up the previous night with the power out and his cat, Sweet Pea, agitated in the darkness.

"The screen door blew open and woke me up, and it was cold and dark. I got

dressed and I was scared, thinking, 'What am I going to do? My cat knew something was wrong. He was jumping all over the place,'" Smith said. "This is brutal cold. The cold is what makes this so dangerous."

Even after Indianapolis lifted a travel ban, officials urged residents to stay home for their own safety and that of police and other emergency workers.

"It's still slick out there," said Marc Lotter, a spokesman for the mayor. "It's just not safe for people to be out on the streets."

Many other cities came to a virtual standstill. In St. Louis, where more than 10 inches of snow fell, the Gateway Arch, St. Louis Art Museum and St. Louis Zoo were closed, along with shopping malls and movie theaters. Even Hidden Valley Ski Resort, the region's only ski area, shut down.

Officials in Chicago and other cities checked on the homeless and shut-ins for fear they might freeze to death on the street or in their homes.

Between a heater that barely works and his drafty windows, Jeffery Davis decided he would be better off sitting in a downtown Chicago doughnut shop for three hours Monday until it was time to go to work.

He threw on two pairs of pants, two T-shirts, "at least three jackets," two hats, a pair of gloves, the "thickest socks you'd probably ever find" and boots, and trudged to the train stop in his South Side neighborhood that took him to within a few blocks of the library where he works.

"I never remember it ever being this cold," said Davis, 51. "I'm flabbergasted."

Turner County contracts with the Minnehaha County Jail in Sioux Falls and the Clay County Jail in Vermillion for inmate housing.

Turner County officials — and the people they serve — should find a more hospitable weather environment when they return to the courthouse today.

According to the National Weather Service, a frigid Arctic air mass will continue to plague the Northern Plains into today, with wind-chill temperatures of 15 to 30 degrees below zero through this morning. However, high temperatures will rebound into the single digits and middle teens as a slow warming trend begins across the region.

Hopefully, the rest of the week won't find any more building problems, Georgeson said, noting the Turner County Courthouse has been closed very rarely during recent history.

"I have been emergency manager only since May, but I have lived in the county my whole life," he said. "I believe the courthouse has been closed for other issues, mostly weather related, only a couple of times."

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at twitter.com/RDockendorf. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net/.

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Wednesday, Jan. 15
6 - 8 p.m.
Avera Professional Office Pavilion and Education Center

Classes are taught by certified lactation consultants in conjunction with community health nurses.

Classes are free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served. Please call 605-668-8221 to register.

Missouri Valley Christian Academy

Kindergarten Sneak Peek

Tuesday, Jan. 14 5:30PM

305 W. 25th, Yankton • Christ the King Lutheran Church

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