



Writer’s Block

A ‘Vacation’ To Remember

BY JILANNE DOOM
sports@yankton.net

For anyone who comes home from a long trip abroad, there is a moment of realization when they are rudely reminded of the fact they are back to their normal life. For some, it’s when they open up their front door and set down their suitcase. For others, it’s the rumble of the airplane as it touches down on home soil.

But for me, it was a much more emotional event. When I woke up the next morning after 26 straight hours of travel from my study abroad program in Italy and there was no cup of cappuccino and Nutella-filled pastry waiting for me on my kitchen table, I felt a little lump in my throat. I was back to real life — and my boring breakfast of Raisin Bran.

Every morning for a month, I walked to the university café and had a fresh cappuccino and pastry handed to me by a little Italian lady as I made friends with fellow students who, like me, were still wearing their PJ’s and, unlike me, didn’t speak English.

Last month, I had the opportunity to study international multi-platform journalism with 50 other students in the small Renaissance town of Urbino, Italy. The program, which was through the Institute for Education in International Media, aims to give college journalism students from across the globe first-hand experience in reporting in a foreign country.

From the moment I walked out of my first class with two Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists and several other professors and professionals from around the country, I knew I was in for one tough but rewarding month.

Throughout the first couple of weeks, we took classes in everything from interview etiquette and Italian language to photo essay shooting technique and video angles. After classes were over, we were thrown out into the field to develop ideas for our final pieces.

And although it was rather small compared to other Italian cities like Rome and Milan, Urbino did not lack culture and opportunities for stories. It seemed like every restaurant, shopkeeper, old building and passerby had a story to tell, but it was our job to sift through this unfamiliar culture to find out if any of them were article-worthy.

For these projects, we each were forced to think of our own story ideas about the area, pitch them to our editors, have our proposals torn to shreds, think of something better, then, finally, start researching, interviewing and writing for feature articles. Each of us not only had to create a written piece, but some type of multimedia component as well. Depending on individual strengths, our multimedia pieces could be simple photo stories to full videos.

For our story ideas, we were told to write about something that fit with both our interests and the culture of the area. So, as a runner and a sports writer, my topic was not a big surprise when I chose to write about a local running club for people of all ages called Urbino Podismo. But instead of just writing a feature about the club, I wanted to connect it to the superior health of the Italian population.

I spent the month researching and interviewing members of the club and the community about the Italian diet, the running and fitness culture in the area, and attending races that they participated in. And even though my topic fit with my interests and my subjects always kept me motivated, my stress levels began to shoot through the roof as other assignments built up and deadlines began approaching.

Now I know what you’re thinking. “Seriously, Jillanne? You had an entire month to write an article and throw together a video. Quit your whining.” Believe me, that is exactly what I thought at first, too. But I forgot to mention that almost no one but our translators spoke English. That aspect threw a little wrinkle in my plan for a perfect Italian vacation.



Doom

And yet, the seemingly impossible language barriers we encountered every day — from ordering gelato to sitting down for hour-long interviews — was the beauty of the experience. Not only did I make several friends in Urbino through just attempting to communicate, but I was able to pick up more Italian language in one month than I did Spanish when I took with two full years of that language in high school. It is truly amazing what you can learn and accomplish with a beginning repertoire of 10 Italian words and top-notch hand gestures.

But don’t get me wrong, I didn’t spend an entire month in a foreign country just to work, study and stress myself out to the point of pulling my hair out. I already do a great job of that at school. I also had some unbelievable experiences outside of my course assignments and final project that I will never forget.

For example, one of my last nights in Urbino, I had a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The night the Italian soccer team (or football as they frequently reminded us Americans) defeated the Germans in the semifinal round of the European championships to advance to the final, the entire town quite literally went insane. As a few of my friends and I walked up the hill towards the Piazza, or city center, nearly every inhabitant of Urbino from the gossiping old men at the coffee shops to drunken college students was parading around the square waving enormous Italian flags, singing their national anthem, illegally diving in the city fountain and shooting off fireworks in crowds of people. The celebration was electric. I had never seen such a display of national pride and public intoxication before and probably never will again.

One of the most inspirational people I met on my trip, and probably in my entire life, was a man named Claudio Pantaleo, who was a Catholic priest and the fastest member of the Urbino Podismo running club. Although much of what I learned from him was about my faith and our shared passion for running, I also picked up a little lesson in Italian driving. On our way to one of his races in a nearby village, he gave me some advice in his broken English. “In Italy, it’s not the fast drivers who cause accidents,” he said as we wound through narrow mountainside roads at 60 mph, “it’s the slow ones.” Let’s just say the only thing that kept me from ducking out the passenger door James Bond-style was that Claudio was a priest, so if we crashed he could at least give me Last Rites or something.

There is just not enough space on this page to describe all my unbelievable experiences. From getting lost in transit-less beach towns to dancing in Italian nightclubs, taking morning runs up hilltops with breathtaking views to stealthily taking pictures of Italians for photo assignments, my trip completely exceeded all of expectations — and I haven’t even mentioned the spectacular food! Just the course in itself helped me develop skills I never knew I had, like journalistic photography and interviewing with an interpreter. The combination of such knowledgeable professors and the experiences I was forced in have turned me into 10 times the journalist I was before I arrived in Urbino.

I think my *Press & Dakotan* sports editor James Cimburek said it best when he called my trip a “working vacation.” While I worked my tail off to finish my final project, let’s be honest, I still got to live in an Italian college town for a month with 50 other American students. It may have been one of the most challenging professional experiences of my life, but I had a blast in the process.

Doom is a student at the University of South Dakota and a part-time sportswriter for the Press & Dakotan.

lives of many people not only in the Yankton community but across the state and throughout the country.

We would especially like to thank the wonderful women of the GFWC and PEO that made her so happy to work with in helping others. Mom is in a better place now with a big smile on her face, holding Dad, Steve and Chris.

Rest in Peace, sweet lady. (From Keith, Julie and Sally)

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

THE DAKOTAS’ OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861
Yankton Media, Inc., 319 Walnut St., Yankton, SD 57078

OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

Obama And Romney Dodging Tax Issues

CHICAGO TRIBUNE (July 10): By tradition, the player selected last in the National Football League’s annual draft is designated “Mr. Irrelevant” because he is so unlikely to play a significant role in the game. But in Washington, there can be more than one Mr. (or Ms.) Irrelevant. At the moment, the most prominent ones are Barack Obama and Mitt Romney.

The federal government is in the midst of serious fiscal crisis and hurtling toward a much worse one. And what do the two presidential candidates propose to do about it? Mostly, they intend to yammer about fiscal measures in a way that suggests they are oblivious to reality.

On Monday, President Barack Obama made a nationally televised announcement, proposing to extend the Bush-era tax cuts, which are due to expire at the end of this year, for everyone except those making \$250,000 a year or more. It’s a step that would widen the federal budget deficit by \$175 billion a year, compared with letting all the cuts expire.

But as Obama knows, his recycled proposal has no chance of passing the Republican-dominated House of Representatives during this campaign season — just as it had no chance of passing when he proposed it in 2010 and 2011. The House, of course, prefers to renew all the tax cuts, at an annual toll of \$225 billion.

Not that extending some or all of the tax cuts at the end of 2012 is a bad idea. Barring such an extension, rates will go up and money will be sucked out of an economy that is already sluggish. The current slowdown might turn into an outright recession. This is not the time for a tax increase.

But neither is it a time to ignore the steadily growing fiscal hole we are digging. Any extension should be part of a broader package that includes concrete measures to bring down the long-term deficit. Neither side wants to address that issue. They would rather leave it for later, or never.

One of the few instances when both accepted needed sacrifice was in last year’s debt ceiling showdown. The resulting plan called for \$900 billion in specified spending cuts over a decade. A so-called congressional supercommittee was tasked with finding another \$1.5 trillion in savings, and if it failed — which it did — the deal called for \$1.2 trillion in automatic cuts roughly balanced between defense and non-defense programs.

Republicans as well as Democrats signed on, but now Romney is promising to tear up the deal because of its impact on the military. The cuts would be large, and they would take a lot of discretion away from the Pentagon, which are two legitimate complaints.

But Romney would do more than simply rescind all the savings stipulated in the debt ceiling bill. He wants to sharply boost the defense budget — even though the United States has withdrawn troops from Iraq and is winding down its mission in Afghanistan.

His plan, says Cato Institute analyst Christopher Preble, would mean nearly \$2.6 trillion in additional defense outlays over the next decade — making it 45 percent higher (in inflation-adjusted dollars) than it was under President Ronald Reagan during the Cold War. A defense buildup of that magnitude is politically unrealistic and financially unaffordable.

Sometime before we arrive at the fiscal cliff that looms at the end of the year — that’s Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke’s term for the simultaneous automatic spending cuts combined with across-the-board tax increases — politicians will have to stop playing chicken and actually reach a compromise on the difficult fiscal choices the country faces.

But so far neither of the major-party presidential candidates will do more than pander. Obama and Romney are devoid of serious proposals, leaving businesses and individuals to guess what will happen. Their irrelevance and irresponsibility leave the U.S. economy hobbled by uncertainty. With so many unknowns looming less than six months from today, job creators have plenty of understandable reasons to delay investing in new hires. Investing, that is, in new workers.

Obama and Romney have chosen to dodge the issue. If they and their similarly feckless comrades in Congress persist down this dead-end path, the consequences of their reckless posturing will not be so easy to evade.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press
Today is Thursday, July 12, the 194th day of 2012. There are 172 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History: On July 12, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed a bill passed by Congress authorizing the Medal of Honor.

On this date: In 1543, England’s King Henry VIII married his sixth and last wife, Catherine Parr.

In 1690, forces led by William of Orange defeated the army of James II at the Battle of the Boyne in Ireland.

In 1812, U.S. forces led by Gen. William Hull invaded Canada during the War of 1812 against Britain. (However, Hull retreated shortly thereafter to Detroit.)

In 1909, the House of Representatives joined the Senate in passing the 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, allowing for a federal income tax, and submitted it to the states. (It was declared ratified in February 1913.)

In 1912, the silent film “Queen Elizabeth,” starring Sarah Bernhardt, opened in New York.

In 1948, the Democratic national convention, which nominated President Harry S. Truman for a second term of office, opened in Philadelphia.

In 1962, The Rolling Stones played their first-ever gig at The Marquee in London.

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter defended Supreme Court limits on government payments for poor women’s abortions, saying, “There are many things in life that are not fair.”

In 1984, Democratic presidential candidate Walter F. Mondale announced he’d chosen U.S. Rep. Geraldine A. Ferraro of New York to be his running-mate; Ferraro was the first woman to run for vice president on a major-party ticket.

In 1988, Democratic presidential candidate Michael S. Dukakis tapped Senator Lloyd Bentsen of Texas as his running-mate.

In 1991, a Japanese professor (Hitoshi Igarashi) who had translated Salman Rushdie’s “The Satanic Verses” was found stabbed to death, nine days after the novel’s Italian translator was attacked in Milan.

In 2001, Abner Louima, the Haitian immigrant tortured in a New York City police station, agreed to an \$8.7 million settlement with the city and its police union.

Ten years ago: The Senate adopted a ban on personal loans from companies to their top officials, a practice that had benefited executives from Enron to WorldCom.

The U.N. Security Council agreed to exempt U.S. peacekeepers from war crimes prosecution for a year, ending a threat to U.N. peacekeeping operations.

Five years ago: A Bush administration assessment said Iraq had achieved only limited military and political progress toward a democratic society; Iraqi leaders responded by insisting they were making progress. The House of Representatives voted to withdraw U.S. troops by spring 2008 despite a veto threat from President George W. Bush. British soccer star David Beckham and his wife, Victoria (of Spice Girls fame), arrived in Los Angeles to begin their new lives in the United States.

One year ago: President Barack Obama awarded the Medal of Honor to Sgt. 1st Class Leroy Arthur Petry, who’d lost his right hand grabbing a live grenade to save his comrades in Afghanistan. Ahmed Wali Karzai, the powerful half brother of President Hamid Karzai, was gunned down in his heavily fortified home by a close associate. A memorial service for former first lady Betty Ford in Palm Desert, Calif., was attended by Michelle Obama, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Rosalynn Carter and former President George W. Bush. Prince Fielder hit a three-run homer and Roy Halladay and his relief combined on a six-hitter to lead the NL over the AL 5-1 in the All-Star game.

Today’s Birthdays: Movie director Monte Hellman is 83. Pianist Van Cliburn is 78. Comedian Bill Cosby is 75. Singer-musician Christine McVie is 69. Actress Denise Nicholas is 68. Singer-songwriter Butch Hancock is 67. Fitness guru Richard Simmons is 64. Actor Jay Thomas is 64. Singer Walter Feeney is 64. Writer-producer Brian Grazer is 61. Actress Cheryl Ladd is 61. Country singer Julie Miller is 56. Gospel singer Sandi Patty is 56. Actress Mel Harris is 56. Actor Buddy Foster is 55. Rock guitarist Dan Murphy (Soul Asylum) is 50. Actress Judi Evans is 48. Rock singer Robin Wilson (Gin Blossoms) is 47. Actress Lisa Nicole Carson is 43. Olympic gold medal figure skater Kristi Yamaguchi is 41. Country singer Shannon Lawson is 39. Rapper Magoo is 39. Actress Anna Friel is 36. Rhythm-and-blues singer Tracie Spencer is 36. Actor Steve Howey is 35. Actor Topher Grace is 34. Actress Michelle Rodriguez is 34. Country singer-musician Kimberly Perry (The Band Perry) is 29. Actor Erik Per Sullivan is 21.

Thought for Today: “If opportunity doesn’t knock, build a door.” — Milton Berle, American comedian (born this date in 1908, died 2002).

FROM THE BIBLE

Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.” John 4:34. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

CONTACT US

PHONE:
(605) 665-7811
(800) 743-2968
FAX:
(605) 665-1721
WEBSITE:
www.yankton.net
EMAIL ADDRESS:
news@yankton.net

SUBSCRIPTIONS/ CIRCULATION:
Extension 112
CLASSIFIED ADS:
Extension 120
NEWS DEPARTMENT:
Extension 114
SPORTS DEPARTMENT:
Extension 106
PHOTO DESK:
Extension 105
ADVERTISING OFFICE:
Extension 122
BUSINESS OFFICE:
Extension 119
PRODUCTION DESK:
Extension 127
NEW MEDIA:
Extension 136
COMPOSING DESK:
Extension 129

* * *

MANAGERS

Gary L. Wood
Publisher

Michele Schievelbein
Advertising Director

Tonya Schild
Business Manager

David Jeffcoat
Circulation Director

Heather Heimes
Classified Manager

Kelly Hertz
Editor

James D. Cimburek
Sports Editor

Beth Rye
New Media Manager

Kathy Larson
Composing Manager

Bernard Metivier
Mailroom Manager

* * *

DAILY STAFF

Brian Anderson
Andrew Atwal

Derek Bartos
Cassandra Brockmoller

Randy Dockendorf
Jeannine Economy

Megan Finnegan
Jeremy Hoeck

Nathan Johnson
Shauna Marlette

Muriel Pratt
Noelle Schlechter

Tera Schmidt
Elizabeth Simms

Taryn Sonnenfeld
Cathy Sudbeck

Brenda Willcuts
Jackie Williams

* * *

Published Daily Monday-Saturday

Periodicals postage paid at Yankton, South Dakota, under the act of March 3, 1979.

Weekly Dakotian established June 6, 1861. Yankton Daily Press and Dakotian established April 26, 1875.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078.

* * *

MEMBERSHIPS

The Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan is a member of the Associated Press, the Inland Daily Press Association and the South Dakota Newspaper Association. The Associated Press is entitled exclusively to use of all the local news printed in this newspaper.

* * *

SUBSCRIPTION RATES*

(Payable in advance)

CARRIER DELIVERY
1-month . . . \$12.09
3 months . . . \$36.27
6 months . . . \$72.53
1-year . . . \$133.09

MOTOR ROUTE
(where available)
1 month . . . \$14.51
3 months . . . \$43.53
6 months . . . \$87.05
1 year . . . \$139.14

MAIL IN RETAIL TRADE ZONE
(where available)
1 month . . . \$19.35
3 months . . . \$50.79
6 months . . . \$101.57
1-year . . . \$148.82

MAIL OUTSIDE RETAIL TRADE ZONE
1 month . . . \$19.35
3 months . . . \$58.05
6 months . . . \$116.09
1-year . . . \$186.33

* Plus applicable sales tax for all rates

YOUR LETTERS

Thanks From Burgess Family

Keith Burgess, Berthoud, Colo.

We would like to thank everyone for their best wishes and support for the recent passing of our mom, Nancy Burgess. It was an overwhelming to try and reply to the hundreds of cards and letters, so we want to thank everyone here.

Mom was a very special person who touched the

YOUR D.C. LAWMAKERS

SOUTH DAKOTA

SEN. TIM JOHNSON: 136 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; Washington Phone: (202) 224-5842; Sioux Falls Phone: (605) 332-8896; email: <http://johnson.senate.gov/emailform.html>

SEN. JOHN THUNE: United States Senate SR-493, Washington, D.C. 20510; Washington Phone: (866) 850-3855; Sioux Falls Phone: (605) 334-9596; Fax: (202) 228-3855; Web: thune.senate.gov

REP. KRISTI NOEM: 226 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515; Washington Phone: (202) 225-2801; Sioux Falls Phone: (605) 367-8371; Fax: (202) 225-5823; email: visit <https://noem.house.gov>

NEBRASKA

SEN. BEN NELSON: 720 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; Washington Phone: (202) 224-6551; email: bennelson.senate.gov/contact/email.cfm

SEN. MIKE JOHANN: 1 Russell Courtyard, Washington, D.C. 20510; Washington Phone: (202) 224-4224; email: log on at <http://johanns.senate.gov/public/?p=EmailSenator-Johanns>

REP. JEFF FORTENBERRY: 1517 Longworth House, Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515; Washington Phone: (202) 225-4806; District Phone: (402) 438-1598; email: log on at www.house.gov/writerrep/

REP. ADRIAN SMITH: 503 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515-2703; Washington Phone: (202) 225-6435; Fax: (202) 225-0207; District Phone: (308) 633-6333; email: log on at www.house.gov/writerrep/