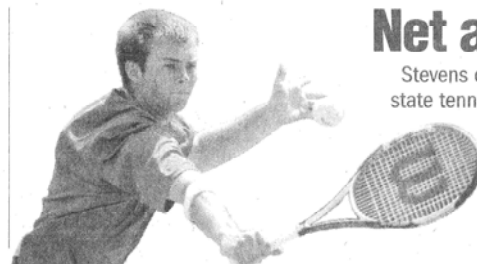


Rapid City Journal

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Net aces

Stevens dominates state tennis tourney, Page G1

YOURS

Letter writers: Are you benefitting your candidate?

Election time! Time for the Journal to be deluged with letters endorsing or criticizing the numerous candidates. How blessed we are that our freedom of speech gives us the opportunity to do so!

But a word of caution to the writers. Are you certain your contribution will benefit your candidate? Are your credentials — your political, theological or ideological orientation — so well known that you actually do him/her some harm? (Especially those who frequently write Letters to the editor; you know who you are!) Whether we like it or not or whether it's just or not, we partially judge our potential officeholders by the company they keep.

So keep those letters coming! They will help some of us make up our minds as to who of the qualified candidates are the most reasonable, caring and wise.

REUBEN BAREIS
Rapid City

We need professionals in city government

Change is good. Let us, Rapid City voters, vote for Sam Kooiker as our new mayor. Sam has always been professional and respectful. The voters who I know are in favor of Sam. He calls meetings in Ward 2 to hear our concerns and acts on them if at all possible.

Let us give credit where credit belongs. Remember the sewage lease-back? Sam investigated and found this to be a serious situation for Rapid City. He is trying now to keep our taxes from increasing. We need professional people in city government to work for the best interest of Rapid City residents. He also stood up for prayer and flag salute before council meetings.

Thank you Sam Kooiker — thanks to all who have stood up for Sam with your letters, etc.

PATTI BEHRENS
Rapid City

Johnson stands up for insurance consumers

All South Dakotans continue to wish Sen. Tim Johnson a speedy recovery.

Yet, even before his return, he ought to be commended for championing bipartisan legislation (The National Insurance Act of 2206, S.2509) to modernize insurance regulation. Putting politics aside, Sen. Johnson is standing up for everybody who buys or sells an insurance product nationwide.

Insurance is regulated by individual states. His legislation will create an optional federal charter (OFC) to allow insurance producers and insurers the choice between state and federal regulation. Sen. Johnson is not advocating the abolishment of the state-based system. He wants to give producers like me the ability to opt into a national regulatory system if it will benefit our customers.

An OFC will encourage competition, which holds great promise for consumers who will benefit by having access to additional products at (possibly) more competitive prices. Insurance agents will spend less time on paperwork and have more time to serve their clients no where they live or move.

This is a win-win for anybody who buys or sells insurance products and Sen. Johnson deserves our support on this issue.

EVERETT E. BURGESSON
Spearfish

Falwell had best hope that God is compassionate

Jerry Falwell rose to fame as an avowed segregationist and racist using the Bible and racial intolerance to advance himself.

When that was no longer a viable political weapon, he turned his attention to the gay and lesbian community and once again used the Bible, fear, ignorance and intolerance for political advantage.

Wayne Besen, executive director of Truth Wins Out (www.TruthWinsOut.org) states: "... we can't help but to reflect on

his life and about all the families he's torn apart and teenagers that committed suicide because he made them feel inferior. He never missed an opportunity to kick our better angels to the curb and capitalize on our lesser demons to advance his career."

Jerry Falwell became rich and powerful on GLBT people's backs. He polarized and divided the country and Christianity itself. Many Christians whose beliefs were based on the loving life of Jesus became embarrassed to call themselves Christian because of the hatred and intolerance Falwell espoused in Christianity's name.

Falwell ignored Christ's admonitions about exploiting Christianity for personal, financial and political gain. Are there smaller camels or larger needles these days? Now standing naked before God, he'd best hope She's more compassionate and forgiving than he's represented.

MICHAEL M. COATS
Director, The Center West
Rapid City

Thanks for successful St. Jude's fundraiser

The Athletic Club, off Sheridan Lake Road, would like to thank everyone who made our May Day Basket fundraiser for St. Jude's Children's Cancer and Research Hospital a success. Thanks to Victoria's Garden, Autumn Hills Liquor, Applebees, Laundry World, and the Athletic Club's fitness director, Dustin Eisenbraun, for their generous donations.

The Athletic Club donated all funds raised from the event to St. Jude's Hospital. A special thanks to all of our members who so generously participated and made this fundraiser such a success. Marie Holm, a SilverSneaker, (the nation's leading senior fitness program participant) was the winner of the basket. Thank you again to all who contributed.

ROBBY CREGUT
Rapid City