

## Perspectives

### Reacquainted with morning

The insidious, persistent sound of a cell phone alarm clock can seem downright baffling at 5:30 a.m., especially when you haven't had to wake up that early in years. Oftentimes, the sound merges with the current dream you're enjoying, interrupting a long-distant memory or disrupting a perfectly good adventure. Even once you wake up, in the haze of half-sleep, the never-ending alarm continues to be a source of confusion and annoyance. Then it hits you: it's time to get up and start the day. A cup of coffee and a quick shower, and I'm (mostly) ready for the world.

At this point I should provide some context. For the last two years, I served as the night editor at *The Daily Press* up in Ashland, a job that allowed me to sleep in because I didn't have to report to work until 2 or 3 in the afternoon. And I often didn't get done until 11 p.m. or midnight, so my bedtime tilted toward 2 or 3 a.m. Since accepting the editor position at the *Tribune-Phonograph*, I have reluctantly come to the realization that my days of rolling out of bed at 11 a.m. are over.

That's OK, though, as I now live in the land of early-rising farmers and 9 to 5 manufacturing workers, so I'm ready to re-enter the normal, daytime working force. I also plan to immerse myself in the local culture as much I can. While living on the south shore of Lake Superior for the last six years, I learned to enjoy whitefish sandwiches and smoked trout, and personally pulled in several nets filled with tiny, silvery

smelt. I even bit the head off one of the tiny bait fish (a smelting tradition) though I prefer them deep-fried with a side of coleslaw. Living deep in the northwoods, I also encountered many black bears and lost a car to collision with a wayward deer.

Now that I have moved from the woods to the prairie, so to speak, I'm ready to take on a new range of experiences. Based on my admittedly limited knowledge of the area, I feel I should learn how to milk a cow, sample a wide range of cheeses and other dairy products and fry up some local brats.

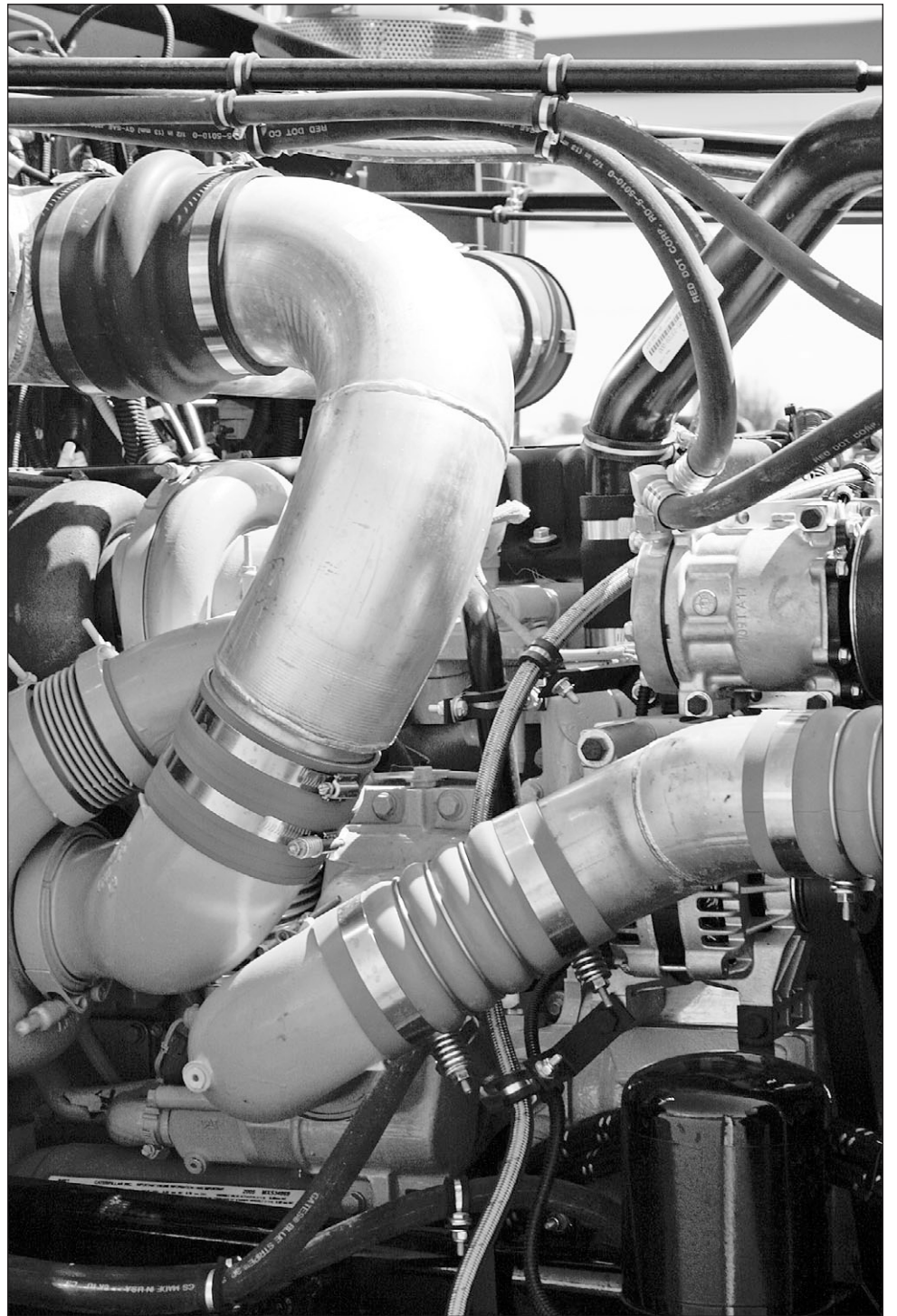
As this is my introductory column, I'll provide a few other biographical tidbits. I'm originally from the Twin Cities area in Minnesota (no, I'm not a huge Vikings fan; I'm fair-weather, like most honest Minnesotans), I graduated from the University of Wisconsin in River Falls, and have worked at newspapers since high school. I look forward to meeting members of the Abbotsford, Colby and surrounding communities and getting to know the local governments and schools. Some of you have probably already seen me out walking my dog Bosco, a friendly but sometimes unruly black Lab/redbone coonhound mix. Feel free to come up and introduce yourself if you see me out and about. And if you have any recommendations on cheese or ice cream, or if you are interested in teaching a city boy how to milk a cow, contact me at [kobrien@tpprinting.com](mailto:kobrien@tpprinting.com).

#### OUT FOR A WALK



BY  
**KEVIN O'BRIEN**  
EDITOR

### WITHOUT WORDS...



### Discovering Miyazaki's splendor

Only on the surface are Hayao Miyazaki movies for kids. Though rated PG or G and animated, they have rare brilliance and stunning detail any adult could appreciate. And beyond the stylistic mastery the director brings to his films, they are always anchored with young heroines finding a worthy cause.

At some point in college I overheard a discussion about Miyazaki's "Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind" between two graduate students going after English Ph.D.s. They spent their days analyzing books until their details are exhausted yet kept one-upping each other on points in the movie. The whole time they were talking about it I thought it was some obscure, French, avant garde film. Imagine my surprise when I found out "Nausicaa" was billed as a children's movie.

Miyazaki movies will often drop you in the middle of realms populated by wizards, blob-like henchmen and armies gearing up for war. They usually forgo exposition and explanation in favor of introducing a vulnerable young heroine who will come between the forces in the background. Miyazaki's worlds take a while to grasp; he lets them develop over the course of the movie rather than attempting to sum them up at the beginning.

This is occasionally frustrating because you feel like you've missed something huge even though you know you're sitting down for its first minute. Imagine watching "Fellowship of the Ring" without seeing its first 20

minutes and never having read the book.

"Castle in the Sky" is the best example. The movie begins with a girl clutching a pendant on an impossibly enormous flying machine. Pirates led by a fiery grandma then swoop in while stoic men frantically try to defend the girl. She falls to earth and the story goes from there.

Miyazaki loves to put things in the air, whether it's planes for battle, witches or random animals. He deals in fantastical landscapes complete with floating (or walking) castles, houses built into soaring cliffs and waste lands of never-ending mist. Some of his best characters are fire demons, flying cats and half-mechanical generals.

But he doesn't leave behind the believable, letting the young heroine find their way out of trouble with a little help from kind, orphaned boys or ancient robots. Though they can wield long-forgotten magic, their doubts are ever-present.

Miyazaki can be faulted for letting his imagination overwhelm his protagonists once in a while. "Kiki's Delivery Service," while a commendable film, is diminished by that flaw. So is "My Neighbor Totoro."

Even when the heroines are a little too noble and their sidekicks somewhat grating, Miyazaki's films can't help but instill some awe into any viewer. I wanted to pull myself away from "Howl's Moving Castle" but couldn't. It, like all his works, has too much splendor to ignore.

#### IF THE CREEK DOESN'T RISE



BY  
**BEN SCHULTZ**  
REPORTER

*Happy Birthday!*

**Mary Alice Gumz Is Turning 70!**

Family, friends and neighbors are invited to help us celebrate at the **Holton Town Hall** **Saturday, September 6** **2 p.m.-9 p.m.** Food, beverages and entertainment provided. **NO GIFTS PLEASE** 35-86599

#### Card of Thanks

Our thanks to family and friends for their caring concern, prayers and cards with the recent loss of our mom, grandma, great-grandma & wife. To all the staff at Zion Lutheran Church & Hemer Funeral Home. To Pastor Neuman for his hospital visits and prayers. Also, a special thanks to the staff at Saint Joseph's Hospital for their care and patience. She will be missed dearly by all.

The family of  
**Ellen Recore Schwoch**