OUT & ABOUT

By Gayle VanVooren, Mascot Editor

We've just celebrated the July 4 holiday and I hope it was a "bang up" weekend for you.
Also hope there were no unplanned trips to the emergency room because of careless fireworks handling.
I have always loved a fireworks display — handled by the professionals. The tossing of firecrackers, cherry bombs and the like were never my forte!
That goes back to my "foolish" years when a whole string of firecrackers went off in my hands because I was careless.
Good grief — I couldn't hear for a couple days!!

But give me a display of shooting stars, bursts of red, green and blue, and I'll be 'oohing and aahing' with the best of them.
Doesn't it seem like a waste though? It costs a great deal to buy the rockets and larger fireworks. But it also seems like an extravagance toward excitement that just seems to be worth it all.
A recent fireworks display in Milbank, SD, still has me in awe. Their city celebrated their yearly town festival, and had a fireworks display that also covered the 4th of July.
Using their Lake Farley as a backdrop, the bursting rockets of color were magnified by the smooth face of the lake.
The most humbling part of the spectacle was the tribute to our soldiers put to music over the radio station. The shooting stars were a tribute to the lives that have served us and those who have died on foreign soil.
Our world is very troubled and we only need to listen to the evening news to hear all the horror

stories.
We still have troops fighting in other countries, our economy is in the tank, we no longer trust the government, the illegal immigrant issue is on many people's minds, and the oil spill just continues to play havoc with our environment.
Do we need a reason to celebrate occasionally? I say YES!
Even though we can get depressed about so many things, we are still very lucky to be American citizens.
Remember to give thanks for the 'good stuff' that we count on every day and just maybe the 'big stuff' will work itself out.
One thing I have noticed ... we are hearing about many more story opportunities thanks to you, our readers. Keep them coming, folks, for that's job security!
Our community is just loaded with interesting characters and it's so fun to share those stories.
When can I come and visit with you?