

# IN KEVIN'S WORDS

## The greatest inventions



**Kevin Holten**

For you, what is the greatest invention of all time? I guess that would depend on how and where you grew up.

For example, maybe you lived on a farm and to you the greatest invention is the milking machine. Or maybe you grew up in Northern Canada and the greatest invention to you is the furnace.

And who is it that comes up with these inventions? Are they the most creative people in the world? Or, as in the case of Thomas Edison, are they the most persistent and are they those that are blessed with an immeasurable amount of perseverance?

Because it's one thing to have a good idea and it's another thing entirely to have the dedication to make it happen. After all, there are plenty of stories of great ideas and inventions whose development was killed by major corporations and entities.

Meanwhile, according to Mr. Dictionary, the definition of invention is "the action of

inventing something, typically a process or device". But shouldn't it instead be "the act of creating something from scratch, like a process or device that has never previously existed in order to make life better for mankind"?

Of course, some things that are invented to make life better for mankind might, in the end, might make it worse. And some might argue that the internet is one of those.

Still, the greatest inventions of all time, which fundamentally transformed human civilization, include the printing press, electricity, the wheel, the internet, and penicillin.

These, along with innovations like the steam engine, telephone, and sanitation, revolutionized how humans communicate, travel, work, and survive.

So, here are some of what might be the most impactful inventions in history:

**The Printing Press (1450):** Revolutionized the spread of information, knowledge, and literacy, enabling the mass production of books. **Electricity (19th Century):** Powered modern civilization, from lighting to industry and technology.

**The Internet (20th Century):** Transformed global communication, information sharing, and commerce. The

**Wheel (circa 3500 B.C.):** Fundamental for transportation and mechanical engineering.

**Penicillin/Modern Medicine (1928):** Transformed health-care, dramatically increasing life expectancy by treating infections. **The Steam Engine (1763-1775):** Fueled the Industrial Revolution, driving factories, trains, and ships.

**The Telephone (1876):** Revolutionized instant, long-distance communication. **The Internal Combustion Engine (1885):** Enabled rapid, personal, and commercial transportation. **The Airplane (1903):** Made global travel fast and accessible. **And Sanitation/Indoor Plumbing:** Drastically improved public health and quality of life.

Then again, maybe you prefer other inventions that have improved your life specifically like the electric razor, the blender, cell phones, television remote controls, massage chairs or robotic vacuum machines.

Of course, classical Athenian philosopher, Plato, once said that necessity is the mother of invention. President Herbert Hoover once said that every new idea and every invention offers opportunity for both good and evil. And movie director Alfred Hitchcock once said that television is like the invention of indoor plumbing. It didn't change people's habits. It just kept them inside the house.

Mystery writer Tom Clancy wrote that man is a creature of hope and invention, both of which belie the idea that things cannot be changed.

Yet, when it comes to statements about inventions, the one I like most was offered by professional baseball player Lefty Gomez who once said, "I've got a new invention. It's a revolving bowl for tired goldfish".

# PARKER'S PERSPECTIVE

## You ever get that really, REALLY strong 'feeling'?



**Gaylon Wm. Parker**

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It's easy to walk through life with blinders on, never truly knowing what's around you until it is right in front of your face. The things that are on the periphery don't come into focus because they lie outside your field of view as you plow forward with your daily tasks and work towards whatever ends are beyond the horizon.

But the truth is that nature exists to the right and left of the sidewalk, and even though it's much easier to stay on the path there's nothing like the feeling of grass between the toes. So, we must always be willing to stray every now-and-then because there's a certain magic out there somewhere we won't be able to grasp until we stumble upon it.

During those otherwise-disciplined times - when we're trudging towards the objective - it's easy to not embrace each moment. But if we flex our senses a smidgen, we get a sniff of others' experiences and hear some pleasant tune off in the distance. That's the precise moment when we can take off our blinders and feel what folks experience in their own existences.

The thing I've noticed about living and working in so many small towns over my life is how connected y'all are TO them. Over there is the tree your great-grandfather plant-

ed, and that's the house you used to visit to slide down the long hill at the back that led to a thicket that had to be evaded while on a snow-sled. It's the memories, you know, and every good memory is truly felt and not simply recalled.

Even more crucial to the small-town experience is the connection to your neighbors in that same, shared experience. That team-effort's-worth of reflections are revisited during reunions or chance meetings, when every shred of the story comes flooding back as your neighbors fill in the blanks of some delightful detail that slipped your mind. Simultaneously, you return the favor to them with your recollections and the whole conversation weaves a tapestry of your shared history.

Isn't there, though, so much work that goes on in the background? The coaches that devoted their time and energy that pushed us to the title; the orange-slices and snacks that were donated by a different Mom that given week; the fans in the stands who were probably re-living their-own lives while watching us excel or fail. It's a tremendous undertaking - life - and requires so many fingers, minds and limbs to make it all possible.

After all that labor, the memories remain (good or bad) ... and while not every plan comes together there's something to be said for the effort. That's what I see, hear and feel in your stories - either ambiently overheard or directly told - and during these moments it all somehow makes sense. Those traditions you've built ain't going away anytime soon, and they're what make for a consistency that helps perpetuate the whole process.

Strangely enough, all these subtle realities came together over

a pair of dates and a collection of roughly a dozen pies in Belfield. You see, during certain games the parents and fans fight tooth-and-nail to win a pie in a not-so-silent auction ... the stakes are high and the pies are eventually bought for a quite-princely sum. What might seem like an average apple, blueberry, rhubarb or cherry pie is a highly sought-after reward with the final gift being donated to the school's after-prom party fund.

Through two of these auctions, I'm aware of, these pies built a kitty of \$3,000-plus combined dollars for the effort, and that's just one fundraiser that helps ensure the students can enjoy an important right-of-passage in safety. Somewhere north of 125 students will be able, someday, to look back on their fun night on the dancefloor with similar friends to their parents ... the clothes they wore, their date that evening (who will probably be married to somebody else and have children of their own), and what car, tuxedo or limousine they rented for the occasion and the dress they wore.

And I know it's not just the pies, that it also will be the decorating committee and the local restaurants, teachers and staff, coaches, parents and fans who will have made it all possible. But the fact that somebody is willing to buy an apple pie for \$500 provides a healthy push towards those overarching goals, as do all the other individuals who are helping make such a lovely event in small-town America a certainty.

I said back at the end of football season last year, "Those must be some pies." But there's not a doubt in my mind they're worth every bite.

**ELECTION NOTICE**  
Billings County Rural Fire Protection District  
Billings County Rural Fire Protection District annual board election will be held March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 7:00 PM at the Medora District Rural Fire Hall.  
*Published February 26, March 5 & 12, 2026*

**USPS - 056-180**  
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Billings County  
**PIONEER**  
Official Newspaper for the City of Medora.  
Official Newspaper for Belfield and Billings County School Districts.  
Official Newspaper for Billings County, ND.  
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The Billings County Pioneer is published each Thursday at GS Publishing, LLC, 22 Central Ave. Suite 4, Beach, ND 58621. Periodicals postage is paid at Beach, ND and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster send address changes to: Billings County Pioneer • P.O. Box 156, Beach, ND 58621  
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City of Medora Preliminary Financial Statement FY 2025					
Fund	Beginning Balance	Expenditures	Revenues	Transfers	Ending Balance
General	\$ 3,007,761.87	\$ 1,785,481.75	\$ 2,070,185.34		\$ 3,292,465.46
Outdoor Recreation	\$ 9,437.12	\$ 32,619.15	\$ 12,850.51		\$ (10,331.52)
Public Utility	\$ 435,730.35	\$ 610,565.24	\$ 609,924.87		\$ 435,089.98
Highway Tax	\$ 403,268.44	\$ 50,313.04	\$ 97,187.53		\$ 450,142.93
Occupancy Tax	\$ 247,764.94	\$ 186,838.37	\$ 211,097.82		\$ 272,024.39
1/2 % Sales Tax	\$ 1,067,229.48	\$ 76,112.48	\$ 76,112.48		\$ 1,067,229.48
2 % Sales Tax	\$ 4,354,454.13	\$ 9,128.68	\$ 1,065,575.17		\$ 5,410,900.62
Cash Reserves					
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 9,525,646.33</b>	<b>\$ 2,751,058.71</b>	<b>\$ 4,142,933.72</b>		<b>\$ 10,917,521.34</b>