

SESQUICENTENNIAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Cleo Erickson

Excerpts from the Plain Talk

1953

New Years Day, 20 years ago, brought a prospect of a deepening economic depression. Ten years ago (1943), the nation and the world was in the midst of a divesting war. The Number One wish for this country as we enter 1953 is that the year will see an end to the fighting in Korea and that it may mark the beginning of a long period of peace in the world. On the National scene the year ahead should be an interesting one. A new administration takes over and the happenings in Washington will focus on such matters as taxes, federal expenditures, and foreign policy. Whether any material cut can be made in federal expenditures will depend to a large degree upon the course of defense spending.

The University has announced the retirement of W. H. Over, former director of the museum. For Dr. Over, the retirement rounds out more than 49 years of service to the University. When he took charge of the museum it had only one box of mineral specimens and a small case of fossils. By 1949, the museum had approximately 75,000 exhibits and items and was attracting more than 12,000 visitors a year. The Board of Regents named the museum in his honor in 1949. President I. D. Weeks indicated the 87 year old Dr. Over may continue as an advisor to the museum as long as his health permits.

Gene Atry, cowboy entertainer and his Melody Ranch Gang from radio and television will appear in a show in Sioux City on January 17th.

In 1952 marriage licenses and births far outnumbered divorces and deaths in Clay County.

New modern lights have been installed in the operating room and delivery room at Dakota Hospital. The new equipment was purchased by the Vermillion Eagles Club.

AN INTERESTING BIT OF HISTORY PRINTED IN THE Plain Talk on Feb. 5, 1953:

(Information on this article was taken from a letter received by Martin Piersol of Vermillion from his uncle, Chas. Nash. Mr. Nash lived west of Vermillion until the flood of 1881. He now lives in Bath, N.Y. and is in his nineties.)

"Back in the early 1870's, I was just a young boy spending all the time I could enjoying the outdoor life on our farm by Meckling."

"This one particular morning I was playing around when a stranger rode in on horseback. He jumped off his horse, gave me the picket rope to hold and went into the house where my mother and father were. While he was in the house I patted the horse and admired him. He was a fine animal. In a little while he came out with a flour sack full of food which my mother had fixed for him while he waited. He jumped on the back of his horse and started for the road where four other members

of the party waited for him. I hung on to the stirrup and talked to him about farming and about school. He had a clear ringing voice. I liked him."

"When we reached the road and the four waiting men I started to pat their horses, too. They all loosened their check reins so the horses could drop their heads to me. They waited for me to go to each one. They all talked to me and seemed to like me. I liked them."

"Of course no one knew it at the time, but those five fellows were members of the James gang. They were on their way south after robbing the bank at Northfield, Minnesota. The one I had talked to was Frank. Other members were Jessie, Bob and Cole Younger and Cling Miller."

City and rural traffic is getting back to normal following one of the most paralyzing snow storms to hit Vermillion and Clay County in several years. Twelve inches of snow fell on Thursday and Friday along with high northwest winds. Travelers were marooned and the temperature dropped to 10 above zero. Street crews stayed on the job for 16 hours in a stretch on Saturday and Sunday to work on clearing the streets. The snow hauled from the streets was dumped at Prentis Park and on the school property on north Elm Street.

Dollar for dollar you can't beat a '53 Pontiac, a General Motors master piece now available at Meisenholder Motor Company.

Announcing the opening of the Center Street Barber Shop ? block north of the Jo Ellen Shop. Owner is Ken Sailor.

A magazine subscription agent from Harrisburg, PA is being held in the County jail on charges of burglary and grand larceny in connection with the theft of \$30 in money and jewelry from the Thorson home in the Westville community. His age is estimated at "about 30". The Thorsons left the door unlocked for their son who was expected home from school in a short time. The Thorson boy told the sheriff that the robber came down from the porch as he was returning home from school. The boy asked the man what he wanted and was told he was selling magazines. Suspicious, the youth quickly checked the house when the man left. The youth found the money and jewelry gone and notified the sheriff. The stolen articles were found in the possession of the man, when he was picked up by the sheriff.

A proposal that the city buy lights and other equipment on the Prentis Park baseball field from the Community Athletic Association stirred up some heated debate at the City Council meeting. Action was deferred to give the council members a chance to get the public reaction to the proposal. A postcard ballot on the matter will be distributed to all qualified voters in the city. Voters are asked to express their opinion for or against the proposal.

million per year for five years, \$1.5 million of which is given to the communities who are approved for participation in the program.

Vermillion will take part over the next three years.

Although the SPF-SIG provides funds to curb both underage and binge drinking, it was discovered through research that binge drinking was a bigger concern in Vermillion.

"First of all, we did a very extensive needs assessment where we interviewed a lot of local people, law enforcement, counselors, did a lot of surveys to find out what the community's perception was on the binge drinking," DeJong said. "With the statistical data and the perceptual data, we found that there was a significant need to implement environmental strategies."

The three biggest downfalls resulting from binge drinking as shown by the data were in regard to sexual activity, violence -

Benefit account established for Payton Hand's cancer battle

Payton Hand, 10-year-old daughter of Doug and Tammy Wohler of Elk Point, was diagnosed with Philadelphia Chromosome Positive Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia on Feb. 10.

Payton has two brothers - Austin, 8 years old, and Chance, 6 years old. Her grandparents are Doug and Tammy Wohler of Vermillion, Wes and Dawn Coffee of rural Elk Point and Scott and Cindy Koeppel of South Sioux City, NE. Payton is a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church and had been attending fourth grade at Jolley Elementary School in Vermillion.

Payton spent 22 days at Sanford Children's Hospital in Sioux Falls. She will be having a stem cell transplant in May at the University of Minnesota Children's Hospital in Minneapolis. Payton will need to be in Minnesota for approximately four months. She is receiving weekly

chemotherapy at Sanford Children's Hospital until her trip to Minneapolis. The young Hand family has been dealt a difficult situation and will need our communities' help as they face the daily challenges of healing Payton, family separations, medical expenses and travel costs.

A Payton Hand Benefit account has been set up at Cor Trust Bank in Vermillion. There will be upcoming events to help Payton and her family battle this fight against cancer. If anyone is interested in helping with fund-raising, benefits, etc. please contact Colette Livingston at 712-301-2176, Lori Jerred at 605-670-8589, or Amy Pohl at 605-579-0014.

Immanuel Lutheran Church is currently selling raffle tickets for a chance at \$25 gift certificates to area restaurants in Elk Point; please see Cristy Harkness, Eileen Henze, or Cheryl Burrell if interested in buying a ticket, all proceeds will go to Payton. There



Payton Hand, 10-year-old daughter of Doug and Tammy Wohler of Elk Point, was diagnosed with Philadelphia Chromosome Positive Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia on Feb. 10. For more information, visit www.caringbridge.org/visit/paytonhand.

will be a booth for Payton at the Vermillion PTA Carnival on April 8, stop in to enjoy the carnival and visit the booth.

If interested you can follow Payton's story on

www.caringbridge.org/visit/paytonhand. Payton would also love to hear from everyone. You can send her a card at PO Box 273 Elk Point, SD 57025.

CUTS

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the school budget.

Cuts originated in Pierre

The cuts to school district budgets across South Dakota originated in Pierre, beginning with a proposal that a 10 percent across-the-board cut be made to the state budget. Gov. Dennis Daugaard proposed the deep cuts to eliminate a \$127 million structural deficit in South Dakota's budget this year.

Funding for K-12 education was spared a 10 percent cut when legislators found a way to dedicate \$12.2 million of one-time funding, reducing the total amount of general aid to schools by approximately 6.6 percent.

This means the Vermillion School District will receive a cut of \$402,000 in per pupil aid from Pierre for the 2011-12 school year. In addition, the district will also receive a total of \$60,000 less in funding because of bank franchise tax and county apportionment. The total funding loss to the district is \$462,000.

The school board had already planned to use over \$115,000 in reserve funds in the 2011-12 general fund budget. It has allocated an additional \$100,000 to reduce the fiscal shortfall to \$362,000.

This school year, the Vermillion School District received \$4,804.60 in per pupil funding from Pierre. With the state general fund budget cuts to education, the district will receive \$4,486.95 for every student enrolled next year. That's a reduction of \$317.65 per student.

Should the state Legislature not find

\$12.2 million next year to replace the one-time funding used for education in the upcoming budget, and should all other cuts remain the same a year from now, the Vermillion School District will see its per student funding for 2012-13 go down to approximately \$4,387.

Passionate plea

The school board has yet to take any formal action on these proposed cuts. There have been no RIF (reduction in force) announcements issued by board members or administrators.

Such action will only happen after the Vermillion Education Association (VEA) has an opportunity to respond to the proposed cuts outlined above. Those figures were presented to the VEA approximately a week ago. They have two weeks from the time of receiving the board's plans to come back with their own proposal for the board to consider.

Although no specific individuals have received a RIF notice, Terri Bellis, a USD professor who for years has volunteered as a choreographer for Vermillion High School's Rhythm in Red and other school musical groups, made a passionate plea to the board at the beginning of Monday's meeting.

She asked that a music teacher position at Vermillion Middle School not be cut as the district struggles to make ends meet with fewer dollars.

Nearly every chair in the Vermillion School Library was filled with students, parents and other adults who attended the meeting to show their support for the school's music program as Bellis spoke.

Bellis, an educator, author and lecturer, admitted to the board that she was extremely nervous.

intention and non-intentional - and issues concerning law enforcement.

Although the data can not yet be distributed, DeJong said one only has to check the records of the local public law enforcement agencies to see how significant the problem really is.

"Those those kinds of statistics alone show what kind of problem we have locally," he said. "I will say that there seems to be a very large, multi-generational problem that continues to go on, and it's probably not something that's very easy to tackle. So I think this

project is very worthwhile - but it's something that will not happen overnight."

While the particulars of the plan have not yet been established, one thing DeJong and Kashas said was that those involved in the project should not be perceived as "fun-haters."

"We realize prohibition didn't work, and so we're just trying to have people make healthy decisions when it comes to drinking," DeJong said.

"In some of the interviews and some of the meetings we've had, there's been a lot of community

members that have been appreciative of us not pointing fingers," Kashas added. "We're being more open and we're trying to work collaboratively to tackle the problem. ...

"I'm really excited to build partnerships in the community because it's such a needed thing in order to get community-wide change. Whichever direction we

go, I think, will be positive," she said.

For those interested in getting involved, Kashas can be reached by e-mailing Tiff.Kashas@usd.edu, and DeJong can be reached at Gary.DeJong@usd.edu.

USD

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of the community - students, parents and concerned citizens.

"We have a good framework of people, but we want to get the word out to try to get more community involvement," he said. "Based on that group of people, we'll come up with an idea of how we want to tackle the problem. And once we find out how we want to tackle it, we'll implement evidence-based programs, programs that were already tried and tested and true, so they're valid and reliable."

Kashas said the model for the program must be complete by May 31 for submission to the state.

"Then they'll let us know ... how much of our plan is approved," she said.

In 2009, the state was awarded a grant in the amount of \$2.135

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