

# art OF VERMILLION

## Auction To Showcase Kids' Talents

By Sarah Wetzel  
For the Plain Talk

The Vermillion Public Library is looking to give back to giving patrons this weekend with the first-ever Children's Art Auction.

"The kids were all excited about having their own art show," said youth librarian Beth Knedler. "I had read 'Fancy Nancy' for story time; about her making art and having an art show. I said, 'You guys are going to have an art show of your own.' So, they did the art knowing it was going to get put in a show and sell to make money for their summer reading program."

There will be a sneak-peek today (Friday) from 1-5 p.m. where art lovers can preview the art and even claim a piece or two if they are unable to make Saturday's auction from 1-4 p.m.

Knedler said she has just under 200 pieces of art, all six-inch square.

"I wanted to do something to give back to the community, to see if they would be more interested in donating if they were getting something in return," Knedler said. "I'm curious how this will turn out."

Knedler said she hopes to sell the artwork for \$10 a piece, but is willing to part with the art for lower donations.

According to Knedler, this is a thank-you to long-time donors, as well as a fundraiser.

"We have a lot of people who will give



SARAH WETZEL / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Kids like these have worked hard creating art to be sold at Saturday's Children's Art Auction at the library to benefit their summer reading program.

nice, sizeable donations," Knedler said. "If they do it like this, they will actually walk away with something. I just wanted to give back because people have been donating for years to the summer reading. It's good for the kids, it's good for the community."

Art comes from kids attending story time, Beyond School Adventures (BSA) after-school programs at Austin and Jolley Elementaries and other USD kids programs.

Knedler has enjoyed the experience of watching the kids create their pieces.

"Especially at that age, it's more about the process than the product," she said. "For kids, a lot of the time the medium they're using is still new to them. So, they're experimenting with it and finding different ways they can incorporate that into a meaningful piece. Then they're done and onto the next piece."

According to Knedler there were some dedicated artists.

"I had a silent room when we were

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## Bringing It Home: Vermillion Telecommuters

By Amber Margheim  
For the Plain Talk

Skipping the morning drive and hopping on the information superhighway instead is just a day at the "office" for Vermillion area telecommuters Terri Mathis, Al Margheim and Ellen Margheim.

For Mathis and Ellen Margheim, this happens almost every day, while Al Margheim logs three days a week from home.

"Working from home is different, but I have to admit the no gossip and/or drama is very nice," said Mathis. "I plan on working from home as long as they offer it and have no desire to work in house again. I don't have to do hair and makeup to go to work. I don't even have to change from my jammies or start the car on cold winter mornings."

Mathis took a risk with a new company when Stream closed their doors in Oct. 2012.

"I had worked at Stream in Vermillion for almost six years when it closed down," she said. "A lot of companies came and did little job fairs for the employees. One of the companies that came was Esurance in Sioux Falls. The opportunity they described was amazing. A few of us were skeptical that this kind of work was even an option in our area."

She started training in Sioux Falls that December, carpooling with four other former Stream employees.

"We did classroom training and phone training for two months and I have been working from home since," Mathis said. "They supplied everything we needed except for the desk and chair. They installed separate internet and phone lines just for business use. At first the schedule wasn't ideal, but after three months we got to select three 'dream' schedules. This definitely frees me up to spend time with family and even go out of town on weekends."

Mathis' job duties primarily include taking customer service calls from her home.



AMBER MARGHEIM/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Ellen Margheim enjoying a peaceful moment in her home office between tittle orders.

"I take calls from policyholders needing to add or remove vehicles, drivers, change coverages, process payments, update addresses and send ID cards," she said. "I also address any billing issues or policy renewal questions they may have."

While Mathis actually lives in Maskell, Nebraska — about 10 miles from Vermillion — she notes, "for a similar paying job, I would have to drive to Yankton or Sioux City. That means my commute would add an extra hour or two."

Telecommuting has only replaced some of the drive for Al Margheim. As vice president of Engineering for an area credit card company, he has significant commute. However, three days a week, it is a simple walk to the computer.

"(Working from home) saves me a lot of money on gas and other car expenses," he said. "It also saves me from having to take sick days when I'm contagious but not too sick to work from home."

Of course the flexibility is nice. "Often I work from home on an as-needed basis," he said. "Sometimes I work from home because it is convenient to being able to keep appointments in Vermillion."

Another reason: being able to work regardless of the South Dakota weather. Telecommuting meshes well with the management side of Al's work.

"I manage teams of computer programmers and

I work with other managers who live outside South Dakota, so much of my day is spent on conference calls or planning projects and activities for the teams," he said. "I don't work from home every day, but if I did my least favorite part would be never seeing any of my co-workers in person."

Ellen Margheim notes she works well independently.

"I'm not someone who needs human contact in order to thrive, so given the choice, I would always choose to work at home," she said. "There are times when it would be nice if I could spend a day in the office, just to deal with various issues. Three or four times a year I do spend a couple days in our offices in Gregory or Platte, but it would be nice if they were maybe only half the travel distance so that I could possibly make a day-trip if it seemed like the thing to do."

Ellen is a licensed abstractor. She does 95 percent of her work for Rosebud Title Company and Platte Title Company.

According to Ellen, very few licensed abstractors work outside the office in a telecommuting fashion. However, her unique background, skill set and a perfect storm of circumstance and change made it possible.

"I've been in the title insurance and abstracting profession for 11 years, the last three of which have been in a telecommuting setting," she said. "I was the manager for one of the local title insurance companies for eight years."

She went on to explain that the sale of the company in 2011 and family issues required her to resign.

However, in 2012 the opportunity to return to the work she excels at occurred.

"In the fall of 2012, I received a call from one of the owners of a loosely affiliated group of title insurance companies here in South Dakota," she said. "The local title company I had worked for had been part of the affiliated group. This group was in the process of adding

new companies in a couple of counties, and there was a need for someone with my experience and flexibility. This telecommuting situation was only offered to me because the owners and managers of the companies already knew me, and were familiar with my experience."

Ellen said that telecommuting requires companies to be able to support their employees while working from home.

"The company has to have the technology for, and be set up in a way, that allows for telecommuting," she said. "There are privacy and security concerns that need to be addressed. Depending on the field you are in you may need access to specialized software. And there may be documentation or information that you need to access, so all those things need to be located on a server in an electronic version versus just a hard-copy in the local office."

Working from home is not always a walk in the park but the perks are worth it. "My favorite part of working from home is the flexibility," Ellen said. "I don't think that every telecommuting job would necessarily include this flexibility, but mine does, and for me that is crucial. There are often deadlines, but generally speaking I am able to work whatever schedule I need to in order to meet the deadline. I love the title insurance industry and flexible telecommuting has allowed me to continue in the job I love."

One thing the three telecommuters have in common is a dedicated workspace. Each of them is able to go into their home office and literally shut themselves away from family chaos.

"Having a dedicated workspace away from kids and other household activities is an important part of overcoming distractions," said Al.

"There's no way I could do it in my living room," Mathis added.

## CCHPC Discussing Water Tower

By Elyse Brightman  
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The Clay County Historic Preservation Commission (CCHPC) met Monday Night at the Vermillion Chamber of Commerce to discuss a short agenda including the fate of the old Vermillion water tower.

"The water tower is coming down," said CCHPC chairman Jim Wilson. "(The city) accepted a contract for demolition."

A plea has been made to the city to save the beacon on the top and possibly the whole roof. The budget for demolition was set at \$40,000 and a bid came in at \$18,000 which leaves potential room for saving these parts.

The fate of the water tower parts and the site are yet to be determined. Due to the high volume of infrastructure underneath the ground, the site cannot be built on.

The commission made a motion to support salvaging the parts of the water tower, including the beacon and roof, for a possible historic sight with an interpretive sign in its place.

## Big Squeeze 2015 Is Underway

Sanford Vermillion Medical Center kicked off its annual blood pressure awareness effort this week. Vermillion's goal is to screen 1,000 people in April.

"The Big Squeeze" program originated as part of the Live Well Sioux Falls initiative and is in its 4th year there.

Sanford Vermillion Wellness nurse Carol Lavin has coordinated the efforts in Vermillion with a goal of educating local and area residents on how to live a healthier lifestyle through improved nutrition, increased physical activity, reduced tobacco use, and by managing risk factors for disease; such as high blood pressure.

"About 72 million Americans have high blood pressure," said Carol Lavin, Wellness Nurse, Sanford Vermillion. "That's one in three adults. High blood pressure usually has no symptoms and increases your risk of heart attack and stroke," comments "High blood pressure is a 'silent killer,' but it can be controlled. 'The Big Squeeze' is a great chance to raise awareness throughout the month of April."

"By participating in a screening, people have the opportunity to learn if their blood pressure is in a normal range, and if not, can take action and see their health care provider," concluded Lavin.

For more information on how to become involved in The Big Squeeze, please contact Carol Lavin, Wellness Nurse at (605) 638-8367.

## Brook To Speak On Climate Change

Professor Ed Brook of Oregon State University will explain his findings on global climate change based on the study of air bubbles trapped in ancient polar ice during a lecture at the University of South Dakota on April 20.

His presentation, "History of Greenhouse Gases and Climate from Polar Ice Cores: Lessons from the Past, Thoughts for the Future," will be presented at 7:30 p.m. in Beacom Hall Auditorium, Room 133. The talk highlights the USD initiation of new members of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest academic honor society, dedicated to liberal arts education and freedom of thought and expression.

Brook has conducted field research in Antarctica, Greenland, Scandinavia, northern Canada and the western United States and runs one of the few laboratories dedicated to the study of gas bubbles frozen in polar ice. He is a Leopold Leadership Fellow, a Google Science Communication Fellow, and a fellow of both the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Geophysical Union.

His presentation is the 27th in the Lito Amundson Lecture series, established in 1988 by Majorie Lito Amundson and her son, Dr. Loren H. Amundson of Sioux Falls. The Lito Amundson program brings distinguished speakers to USD each year from disciplines in the liberal arts and sciences. Both Mrs. Amundson and her son were members of Phi Beta Kappa at USD. Dr. Amundson received his M.D. degree in 1954 and was named a Distinguished Alumnus in 2004.

For more information about Dr. Brook's lecture contact the USD Department of Earth Sciences at 605-677-5649.

## Burrow Wins Teaching Award

David Burrow, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of History at the University of South Dakota, is the 2015 recipient of the Monsignor James Doyle Humanities Teaching Award, presented by the College of Arts & Sciences.

Burrow will receive the award on April 20 at the 2015 Phi Beta Kappa initiation and Lito Amundson Lecture.

Burrow, who joined USD in 2006, teaches courses on Russian History, the Holocaust, Nazi Germany and the Enlightenment. In all of his classes, Burrow said he emphasizes the importance of researching and interpreting primary sources, such as letters and diaries, when attempting to understand a historical period.

"By reading primary sources, students can work on interpretation and get at the complexities of a topic," Burrow said. "They're not just absorbing my view."

This spring, students in Burrow's upper-division Holocaust class are working with primary sources not available to the general public. As part of a Holocaust digital education project that Burrow helped develop with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., history students are researching translated diaries and oral histories in which survivors documented their experience.

While the Holocaust class offers rewarding teaching experiences, Burrow said his favorite courses are those that focus on Imperial Russia, which is his area of research. "Students who take that class say I don't need notes to remember what to say. I need notes to remember to stop talking," Burrow said.

Kurt Hackemer, professor and chair of the Department of History, said students see only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Burrow's classroom activities. "Our students know that Professor Burrow is a great teacher, but they have no idea how much time and energy he invests in preparing and delivering his courses," Hackemer said. "He creates interactive and innovative experiences for them every semester, and it is a privilege to have him in our department."

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## Living and Learning



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## Wednesday, April 22

10:30 a.m. Main Street Center  
320 W. Main St.

Topic: Care for the Caregiver  
Speakers: Ariadne Albright, Coordinator,  
Sanford Arts Vermillion  
Melissa Langle-Lee, Social Worker,  
Sanford Vermillion

Free and open to public!

For more information please  
call Kari Jo at (605) 638-8319

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