

Burbach Family Bonds Over Community Theatre

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

For a family as busy as the Burbachs, it is nice to share some interests.

This summer they get to share something special as the whole family participates in the Vermillion Community Theatre's production of 'Mary Poppins', set to show at Vermillion High School August 21-24.

Gretchen Burbach will be playing the title role, 'Mary Poppins' while her children have parts as toys.

Anthony Burbach, though not onstage, plays a big role in the production as music director and President of VCT.

"I think it's nice to spend time with my family," he said. "I dedicate a lot of time to this so if they don't come and be in the show then I don't get to see them."

On and off the stage, life can be a balancing act according to Anthony.

"The challenge though is our kids also do other sports so when Gretchen and I are both in a show we sometimes miss some of their other sports," he said. "That's the challenge. Last year she had a pretty small part in 'Oliver' so she could go to a lot of games but I missed quite a few. This year because they moved the show back we've both been able to go to a lot of games so it's worked out well this year."

According to the Burbachs both Sarah and Abby are involved in softball which ended before rehearsals for 'Mary Poppins' began. Their brother enjoys baseball and participated in the regional championship this year. He also plays basketball and golf. Ben Burbach, 11, plays a toy soldier in the show and said his favorite part is the dancing.

"It's fun," he said.

Ben also mentioned that he likes having his family in the show with him because it gives him someone to talk to.

His younger sister, Sarah, 7, and older sister, Abby, 14, also play toys.

Sarah portrays a mouse and Abby is a doll.

All have participated in VCT productions previously.

"Last year we did Oliver," Anthony remembered. "Sarah was in Oliver, so was Abby. The year before that we did 'Robin Hood'. All three were in that."

Mom got in on the action as well, onstage for 'Oliver' and playing the baritone euphonium in the pit orchestra for 'Robin Hood'.

The variety of talents in the family provide a fun performing experience with little



SARAH WETZEL/FOR THE PLAIN TALK
Anthony and Gretchen Burbach along with their children form an indispensable team in creating the Vermillion Community Theatre productions that the community has grown to love.

competition.

"We're in kind of different areas," Gretchen said. "I think it's different enough."

The Burbach family has a rich history of involvement in the VCT, Anthony being responsible for restoring this performance opportunity to community members.

"About twelve years ago we did a show at our church not connected to VCT,"

Anthony shared. "We did a fundraiser for Make a Wish Foundation. I musically directed that. We had a great experience, a lot of fun. I had heard that there used to be a VCT years before that. So when we got done with that show I asked where's the checkbook and where's the leftover stuff from VCT and could we get it going again. There was still a checkbook laying around with a little bit of money in it so we just started it up again. Since I started it I guess that made me President."

Twelve successful productions later and Vermillion is still toe-tapping away thanks to his hard work.

While Anthony takes care of the musical aspect of the show, Gretchen and the kids are busy not only memorizing music but also connecting with their characters.

But how do you connect to your character if you're playing a toy like the Burbach children?

"We're still developing that," Gretchen said. "[The director,] Callie does a pretty good job telling them that

these children that have them as toys haven't been treating them very well so they need to teach the children a lesson so she's trying to bring out some acting skills by giving them a little motivation there."

As for her character, Gretchen feels some connection though doesn't feel her personality matches Mary's exactly.

"She likes to make things fun when you're learning," she said. "I'm a school teacher and I always try to make my lessons fun for the kids like that. I think she's probably a little more vain. She thinks she's practically perfect and I'm a little more flexible. I think there's some things I can connect with the character but it is acting. It's not myself up there for sure. It's not my personality."

The show is based on not only the Disney movie but also books by P.L. Travers.

"Sarah and I are reading them right now," Gretchen said. "I think the character has softened up with the Disney movie. Even in this show I think she's softer than the books for sure. We're about midway through the first book and they're very silly chapters. We're intrigued to go on to the next one just to see what's going to happen because it's just so out there."

The Burbach parents both have extensive musical backgrounds.

"I did music education and performance," Gretchen said.

"I did shows whenever I could in high school and at USD and then when VCT started. Whatever I could get I was onstage just to continue that performing part of my interest."

"I started piano at a very young age and did it all through high school," Anthony shared. "When I got to college I did a lot of accompanying and now it's more some church accompanying but mostly just playing in church. So it's just years and years and a life of piano. I don't have any formal training with directing an orchestra. It's just years of doing it. Now I've been conducting the orchestras here for twelve years."

It was a learning process according to Anthony.

"The first years were hard but now I've been doing it for twelve years so I think I'm doing pretty well," he said. "It's different working with a community theater as opposed to working with a professional orchestra. You have to treat people differently and work things a different way and go through a little slower. You can't just expect things to be perfect the first time."

Mom and Dad couldn't be more pleased that they get to share some musical experiences with their children.

"We want the kids to be well rounded," Gretchen said. "We want them to do a variety of things and then go where their heart desires and kind of lay the ground for them. Eventually they'll find out if they love it or don't love it and can continue if they want to. But it's pretty neat. I remember being exposed to it at a young age and it's been there in the back of my mind that it was so fun."

Anthony agreed. "Like I said it's so valuable to me for them to be doing it so I can do it and we can be together," he said.

Aside from music, the family does other things together like going camping.

"We went camping in Arkansas," Ben shared. "We saw all our aunts and uncles."

"That was last summer," Anthony said. "We took a week-long trip."

This year their summer destination is Disney World.

Sarah reported excitement about eating with the princesses especially Rapunzel and Ariel.

For more information on VCT's production of 'Mary Poppins' visit vermillioncommunitytheatre.org.

Tickets go on sale today (Friday, Aug. 7) and can be picked up at Nook n' Cranny and Davis Pharmacy.

He said another big part of his job is going to be knowing where the crowds will be, something that is still developing.

"Emergency Operations Center sounds grandiose, in reality it is not there for an emergent situation," Stewart said. "The easiest way to think about the way the structure works is Fire, EMS and Police are all out doing their thing; we are there to assist them. Get them what they need, to make their job easier."

Yet, Stewart said he doesn't think anyone truly knows what to expect this year.

"I would assume incident numbers will be up just because of sheer volume, not because of any more violent crimes," he said. "Just the amount of EMS calls will be into the hundreds."

"Nobody wants a big incident, but were something to happen - even a 10-car pileup on the interstate - it is going to be a huge thing. Hopefully with no deaths or anything, but all of a sudden you have cars backed up miles. That causes issues. It is just working through the day-to-day stuff."

Forbes Ranks USD Among Top 650 Colleges In The USA

USD is on the 2015 list ahead of all other colleges in the Dakotas. It's the top public school and second behind only the University of Denver in the Summit League Conference. And USD ranked as the top school among those in the Missouri Valley Conference.

"We are excited about the endorsement as the best in the Dakotas, but we are equally excited about where USD stands in our athletic conferences," said Scott Pohlson, USD vice president of Marketing, Enrollment & University Relations. "Being the best in the Missouri Valley Conference and second in the Summit League Conference aligns well with our strategic plan at USD, which is to be the best small public flagship university in the nation built upon a liberal arts foundation. It is an exciting time to be at USD, and Forbes' endorsement reinforces why our Coyote Family continues to grow in stature."

Forbes, which partnered with the Center for College Affordability and Productivity for the ranking, said its methodology focused on what students get out of college, including satisfaction, post-graduate success, student debt, graduation rate, academic success and how each school ranked the past three years.

Mount Marty College Riverboat Days 5K Run/Walk Planned

YANKTON - Mount Marty College will hold its 17th annual Riverboat Days 5K Run/Walk on August 22, 2015 in historic downtown Yankton, South Dakota. The race will begin at the intersection of 3rd and Capital with the 5K Walk time at 7:15 a.m. and the 5K Run at 8:15 a.m. Awards will be given at 9:15 a.m. in the parking lot adjacent to the start/finish line to the top three finishers for each age group.

The entry fee for registration after July 31 is \$20, and race day is \$25. Fee includes a MMC Riverboat Days 5K Run/Walk t-shirt and awards are given to the top 3 finishers in each age group.

Registration may be completed online at www.allsport-running.com. Additional registration forms may be found online at www.mtmc.edu/5k and www.riverboatdays.com. Packet pickup on race day is from 6:45 am to 8:00 am. Early pick up of registration packets can be done at Cimpr Arena in room 118.

This annual event is organized and sponsored by Mount Marty College athletics. All proceeds go to support MMC student athletes. For more information, please contact the race director Randy Fischer at 605-270-2066 or at randall.fischer@mtmc.edu.

Peterson Named SESDAC, Inc. Employee Of The Month

Char Peterson, Direct Support Professional, was selected as the SESDAC, Inc. July 2015 Employee of the Month. Char has been a part of our organization since July, 2014.

Char was nominated for the award by her fellow co-workers, based on her dedication to her job and the people she supports.

Co-workers had the following compliments written in their nominations for Melissa... Char is a POWERHOUSE of a staff. She is always a step ahead of what is going on and prepared for the next step. She has the patience of a saint. Char ROCKS!

Char currently resides in Elk Point.

Party

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they had used to do block parties but were not doing them anymore and were very excited that someone was starting them again. I saw photos where there were a lot of people at the block parties. We had free food, the police provided hotdogs. So, I have heard all good things."

The finale for the local celebration was an outdoor movie held in Prentis Park.

"We are showing 'Big Hero 6' so I think it is a good movie for all ages," Brady said. "We have a very good crowd. I hope people want to continue to do this, whether it is for National

Night Out or just something we do once a summer. We hope people want to continue."

Brady said the hardest part about organizing the day was scheduling.

"Obviously, having your regular job and trying to fit in the scheduling is interesting," she said. "We got a lot of help from Parks and Rec this year arranging the movie and the officers arranging the block parties on their own time. It is a lot of getting the advertising out there so that people know what is going on."

No matter what Brady said she looks forward to next year.

"It is definitely a possibility that we will continue these events in the future," she said.

Stewart

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the Rally Operations Center as a liaison to Meade County," he said. "So, if something comes up that is more than Meade County can handle on their own, I can get state resources for them. The main job of it all is going to be resource management and acquisition; a lot of situational awareness things, because even now they don't know where the larger groups are going to be."

Last year an estimated 442,000 people made the pilgrimage to Sturgis from around the world.

Sturgis officials have been planning for up to a million people to attend this year's rally, which begins Monday and runs through Aug. 9.

"They are expecting a lot of people, but they are spread out over quite an area, as well," Stewart said. "Sturgis the town itself can only hold - Main Street Sturgis - can only physically hold so many. But, as an area, it is still going to be probably double what it was last year."

The South Dakota Highway Patrol and Sturgis Police Department plan to add several extra officers to respond to accidents, deal with

crowds and address parking issues, among other things.

Regional Health officials have added 30 people to work each day in Rapid City during the rally. They expect to spend about \$100,000 per day in additional operating costs during the event.

As for the ROC, Stewart said it isn't just the state's emergency managers.

"It isn't just Emergency Managers on IMAT," he said. "It is comprised of individuals from all the different aspects of emergency response. I want to say there will be 40 of us on the team. There will be military personnel there. There will be Department of Transportation (DOT) people involved. It is interesting to see how much effort the DOT puts into this, just for road closures and traffic issues. It is amazing how much work they do. You don't think of the highway crew as being a part of this, but they are a huge part of it."

Stewart explained the IMAT team is there to assist should Meade County officials need help.

"All the calls (911) will be handled through the Sturgis dispatch center however they normally do business," he said. "Where I will be working is a separate entity to all of that, we are there to support their people and help them make things run as smooth as

possible. If the county has a situation that they can't handle by themselves, they will give IMAT a call. We wouldn't take over the incident - just give a hand, helping them out."

For example he said just the amount of logistical things going on such as making sure there is enough bottled water and port-a-potties could be something he deals with.

"Something that simple - that is our job," Stewart said. "If Sturgis has a water main break it doesn't seem like a huge deal around here, but all of a sudden you have more than 50,000 people without water. What are we going to do to help? Not that we should give water away to take away from the vendors, but there are people that live there, too. You have to think about that."

Stewart noted he is very curious to watch the flow pattern of all the people who will be attending the rally.

"I am curious to see what it actually flows like," he said. "You can almost picture it as a mall, there is going to be a flow pattern. I am curious to see how that works. My shift is evenings and nights so, I am just curious because I have never been on Main Street during Sturgis. Where I have been the last few years was pretty calm."

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