

HISTORICAL HEROES

Downtown Mural Restoration Planned

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

Traveling East on downtown Main St. if you look to your left when you pass Center St. you will see a faded yet intricate mural.

Natives of the town have grown up with this piece of historic art entitled 'Missouri Weave' by South Dakota artist Dick Termes, originally painted in 1978. It depicts geography and history of Clay County and Vermillion.

Phyllis Packard, County Commissioner and co-owner of Lumos Studios whose building boasts the mural on its side, is heading a project to restore Missouri Weave to its former glory.

"It has been through a couple of restorations," she said. "The last ones were I think it was 1988 and 1994 or somewhere in there. It definitely needs to be done again and we'll have to see if there's some kind of sealer that would make it last even longer with the color."

Termes will be in Vermillion September 21 through 25 to restore the mural.

"He will have an assistant and anyone who wants to come and hold a paintbrush we'll show them where to paint between the lines," Packard said. "We'll brighten it up and strengthen it."

No artistic experience is needed to help out with the project according to Packard.

"If you can hold a brush and take some direction you're on our crew," she said. "The other times we had people of all ages. Sometimes they'd work for fifteen minutes and others for hours. I think it would be up to the parents. It would not be a place to just drop your kids, that's for sure." Parental assistance is required for all children according to Packard.

Packard was part of the group to help paint the mural originally.

"Oddly enough I do own the building now," she said. "It's something that has bothered me that really needs work. It really hit me this year that I could ask for help. It was in the back of my mind wanting to do this. Dick was at a university earlier this year and had his work on display and I chatted with him then and he was very interested in doing it also. Once we reconnected we said we're not getting



COURTESY PHOTO

While once the mural on downtown Main St. was vibrant, it is currently faded and damaged sparking an initiative to restore the painting to its former glory.

any younger, we'd better do it now."

Some of the first steps included figuring out a budget and getting the Vermillion Area Arts Council (VAAC) on board as a sponsor so grants could be applied for.

"From there we started raising some funds locally," Packard said. "Individuals and businesses in the city have put money in. I just submitted a letter to the South Dakota Community Foundation requesting assistance."

Fundraising for the project has even progressed to digital.

"A friend from California who had actually graduated from USD said that he couldn't find his checkbook so why didn't I try Gofundme?" Packard said. "I didn't even think about that. We've raised about \$2,000 towards it through the Gofundme. It's amazing because it gives all sorts of people a chance to be a part of it. There's been little donations of 10 and 20 but everything helps."

Packard said she has seen donations from both friends and strangers ranging from Vermillion locals to donors from California, Wisconsin, Indiana and even Australia.

"I am amazed at the incredible amount of support," Packard said. "Over 50 people have contributed on the Gofundme. They either know Dick and his work or know the mural.

They're making comments like yes this needs to be done. It's a big part of Main St. downtown."

The project is currently about \$1500 away from the goal if the desired grant is received, if not another \$5000 will be needed.

"I'm amazed that it's done so well and we still have a month to go," Packard said. "I think we'll make it. Actually we have to make it. He's already hired."

Termes has painted about 15 murals around South Dakota. However only three remain, the one in downtown Vermillion being one.

"It's really important to keep this so we don't lose another one," Packard said.

Though the project is still going well, funds are still needed as well as volunteers (particularly tall adults) and a contractor to assist in repairing the cement at the base of the mural.

Though individuals wishing to help paint only need to show up during the appointed days, larger groups wishing to help should contact Phyllis Packard beforehand at lumostudios@gmail.com or leaving a message at 605-624-9222.

Painting will take place all day September 21 through 25.

Those wishing to donate may visit www.gofundme.com/3u7qj6s77q.

'Heartbeat Of The School' Gets Improved Circulation

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

Along with preparing classrooms and schedules for the new school year, the Jolley Elementary Library has undergone some major improvements, most notably a brand new circulation desk.

"We had a team behind this," said Jolley Principle Sue Galvin. "Basically what we've done for the last six months is we've had a committee of librarians and we've talked about who is Jolley, who are the students, what's important to them? What can we do to start enhancing the library so kids get a strong message that we expect all kids to be literate?"

The new circulation desk along with some new kid-proof couches and benches comes as the first part of a three-year phase.

"Year one is just the enhancement here," Galvin said. "You'll see the new circulation desk and some furniture here. Then we're going to have a little Lego Land over there. Then also we'll have the Ipads like a research center just to make the facility a little more multi-purpose."

The new circulation desk is a great start with a three-sided counter giving the librarian, Kayla Brouwer, a great view of the whole area. It also includes a drop box for returned books, shelving, filing and two computer stations.

"You might actually get to see Mrs. Brouwer when you come into the library instead of just books stacked everywhere," said Sharla Krell, librarian at Vermillion Middle School. "I get to wear the hat for organization for all the libraries. I'm in charge of ordering. I'm in charge of helping these guys figure out what they want for their building. That's my team part in this."

The project included making more space to work in.

"There was a wall here and used to have the computer room behind it but the computer room moved so it was a teacher work space," Galvin said. "What we did was move that and push the shelves back. There's more square footage too."

The students and librarian are very enthusiastic about the changes.

"I can help people from every angle and they can come up and be involved and help me even with checking books in, checking books out, researching things," Brouwer said. "But with our other desk it wasn't possible to have



SARAH WETZEL/ FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Jolley Elementary Library has undergone some major improvements this summer, most notably a brand new circulation desk.

kids around it."

"Our tech department came in and moved all our wiring over here so that we can enhance that area as well," Galvin said. "And we can still get the entire student body in here as well. Then the high school students for the National Honors project painted the mural on the wall."

The idea of a multi-purpose library is meant to maximize student learning according to Krell.

"That's one of the hot new ideas in media centers is to have spaces to build and create so we've got one of those coming in over there," she said speaking of a new Lego table.

Galvin agrees. "One of the purposes is for kids to be able to read a book and then expand their thinking via different modes," she said. "So if they read a book about a bridge and want

to design their own, higher order of thinking. They can talk about their books, write about their books, build about their books."

According to Krell, funds for the project come from a grant program by Edith Siegrist.

"Edith Siegrist left money to the Vermillion Public School libraries as well and so we have a grant that we work with each year," she said. "The goal was to enhance the libraries in whatever form that took. Over the years there have been technology enhancements. Sometimes it's just been supplies or books or whatever is needed. This year we decided one of the things that was needed was furniture and some of the fundamental things in this space. We are going to redo some of the other spaces as well but we wanted to start

with Jolley and get them something solid. It coincided nicely with the One Team One Dream so this is the place that it started."

The school libraries get about \$10,000 to work with each year according to Krell for a period of 14 or 15 more years.

The Jolley project took about \$6,000.

"We worked with different entities too with the grant," Galvin said. "The after school program, Beyond School Adventures, had a small investment as well because they use the space. Then also the district. Basically it was a collaboration project. I've always felt professionally that the library needs to be the heartbeat of the school. Susan has been phenomenal support and Sharla as far as trusting us and working with us and yes we can make this happen."

2015



Fall EMT Course

Vermillion Fire EMS Department is pleased to announce that through a partnership with Sanford Vermillion Hospital we will be offering an EMT Course in Vermillion this fall.

Course will start August 24th, 2015 and run thru December 12th, 2015.

Classes will be held Monday & Thursday from 6pm-10pm and 1 Saturday per month from 8am-5pm.

For more information or to register as a student please contact our station at 605-677-7098.

Vermillion Children's Choir Set To Begin

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

The idea of a children's choir in Vermillion, years in the making, is finally coming to light thanks to University of South Dakota graduate student Mandi Steele.

"Dr. Holdhusen and Dr. Gesteland for many years now have contemplated this for many years, having a choir here for children," she said. "But obviously they're so busy that's something they didn't have time to do."

Steele herself is short on time being a mother of five plus completing her master's degree in music education.

Steele approached Dr. David Holdhusen, director of choirs at USD about ideas for the required project for her degree.

"He mentioned this community choir idea and said it's going to be a ton of work because you're basically starting a business from scratch," she said. "It will entail fundraising and grant writing and organization and legal stuff. I decided that was something I thought I could do. Jeremy and I have started several businesses on our own so it wasn't too out of the norm for us. It was finally approved as my project in May."

The initial phase of the choir's five-year plan will include one choir for ages 9-13 or grades four through seven meeting once a week.

Auditions will be held September 8 from 4-6 p.m. and September 10 from 5-7 p.m. at the United Church of Christ (UCC) on Main St.

"It's an auditioned choir, however when I say auditioned for children it means something different than auditioned for adults," Steele said. "Basically you come in and sing happy birthday, you sing a couple notes off the piano. That's about it. See where they are. For the most part we're trying to keep it something more special. In the future the goal is to have two choirs. Right now what we need to do is establish a reputation of excellent singing and excellent opportunity."

There is no limit to participants.

"We will take any number," Steele said. "Obviously we would love it to be like 100 children but we'd be happy with 40-50. If we get less we'll still do it but we'd like it to be a good turnout. There's a lot of kids that are into that. We're hoping we can draw on that crowd. This town seems to have an abundance of artistic people."

Expectations are not through the roof for participants according to Steele though it is audition.

"You're talking the kind of children who can pretty much approximate the pitch they hear," she said. "Next year we're hoping to have two choirs. One choir would be for younger so possibly even second or third grade for kids who can't find that pitch or who don't know how to sing and do all that. Then we would have the older choir. For now though we're sticking with one choir because that's all I have time for."

Not just Vermillion children are invited. "If you have a 20 minute drive to get here please come," Steele said. "It's for the whole area."

There are already four concerts for the choir scheduled, two of which will be in conjunction with USD choirs.

"They'll have one church service," Steele said. "We're doing all our practicing at the United Church of Christ. They are being phenomenally helpful in all of this. We're going to do a concert for one of their church services as a thank you."

According to Steele, practices will be every Tuesday after school from 3:30 to around 5:15.

"We're setting it up so we have a Jolley walk-over," she said. "So all the kids at Jolley meet at one place and we walk them over so the parents don't have to pick them up and drop them off. The middle school kids still have to figure out how to get there."

The practices are meant to be so much more than a simple rehearsal according to Steele.

"The kids will come and they're going to have games and snacks," she said. "They're going to have music activities. They're going to learn how to read music. Then they'll have an actual rehearsal like a choir. Dr. Gesteland who's conducting it, she was one of the Chicago Children's Choir conductors. It's incredible to have someone like her here."

So far the staff consists of Dr. David Holdhusen as Executive Director, Dr. Tracelyn Gesteland as music director, Steele as President of the board of directors and Gretchen Burbach as Vice President.

"We're going to build a board of parents and community members," Steele said. "After the auditions we're going to have a big meeting where we ask parents who would be interested in volunteering for either positions or as representatives and after we ask the parents then we'll open it up to the community."

Tuition for the choir according to Steele will be \$300 per child for the year with half due up front and the other half payable second semester. Scholarships and payment plans will be available.

"If your child gets in and you just cannot afford it we will have donations for scholarships or payment plans," Steele said. "We don't want to have any child miss out on this opportunity. If you can pay it, please just pay it because that's less taxing on our donors."

"I'm going to try and find as many donors as I possibly can and as many grants," Steele said. "I can't guarantee Dr. Holdhusen and Dr. Gesteland that I'm going to get enough fundage up and running. We have to be able to pay both of them for their work. We have to buy uniforms. We have

CHOIR | PAGE 14

Make Yourself At Home

In a safe, secure and beautiful lease house.

MECKLING HOUSE

➔ **Now Leasing for 2015**
New Premier Student Housing

Facility Maximum Occupants: 22

• 5-Single Room w/half bath \$300/mo (shower & tub close by)

• 7-Single Room w/full bath \$350/mo

• 2-Suites (2 occup) w/full bath \$500/mo Jacuzzi Tub

• 1-House w/3 bedrooms \$850/mo Family or 3 individuals

All areas have access to lounge area, kitchens, exercise room, and sand volleyball court.

Quiet country living all just 10 minutes West of USD Campus or 15 minutes East of MMC Campus on 4-lane Hwy!! Preference given to grad students.

For more information
Call 605.350.0413