

# A Sinking Feeling About School

BY DARIS HOWARD

I walked into a local store and saw many aisles full of back-to-school supplies. The sheer volume caused me to remember a school in Peru.

We had gone to visit the floating islands of Lake Titicaca. The islands were fascinating. The first ones had been built when the Spaniards had taken over the country. Some of the Indians, not wanting to be ruled by the Spaniards, had moved out onto the lake. They built the islands and created their own little communities. But as the centuries passed, and Peruvians gained self-rule, the Peru natives still continued to occupy the islands. I was fascinated to see how they lived. Though much of their livelihood now comes from tourism, at one time they subsisted on fishing and making small crafts they could sell on land.

The islands we visited never had more than four families, and most only had three. They didn't want too many, fearing that the weight would cause the islands, which were built out of reeds, to sink.

"Where do the children go to school?" I asked.

One of the natives, who spoke a fair amount of English, told me that there had been a school built on one of the islands. Each day the

children, from first through eighth grade, would go there. It was the biggest island because the families from all across the lake came together to build it. It only had one big, reed building and a chalkboard. The children would sit cross-legged on the floor as the teacher taught.

He also told me that it was always interesting sending the children off to school because, if there had been a big wind, the school would not be in the same place it was the day before. Even though the islands were anchored, strong winds would still push them, anchor and all, across the lake. There were times they spent half of the day just finding the school.

But then, if I understood his story correctly, after the school had been there for about ten years, the government did as many governments do. They decided that the school was not sufficient. It was decided that the children would each have to a desk. Desks were provided, and the children, who were used to sitting on the floor, stacked them against the wall and continued sitting on the floor.

Then the government decided that the building was not sufficient, so the reed one was torn down and a new one was built out of wood. Then the government

felt that a single chalkboard wasn't enough, so more were added. Again and again something was deemed to be less than adequate, and something new was added.

Then, one day, when the parents brought their children to school, it wasn't there. There had been no wind since the previous day, so they didn't know where it would have gone. After a brief search, someone noticed debris floating where the school had been. Upon closer inspection, everyone realized their school island had sunk.

The government took that as vindication of their concerns that the school and the island weren't good enough, while the locals knew it was the items the government forced upon them that caused the island's demise.

The children were excited to be out of school, and the man telling the story said his family decided to take the opportunity to visit relatives in Lima.

"But it didn't work out too well," he said. "Everyone wanted to know why our children weren't in school. 'Didn't you just tell them?' I asked.

"Yes," he replied. "But you see what strange looks you get when you tell people that your children can't go to school because it sank."

# Vermillion Pets To Take The Plunge

BY SARAH WETZEL  
For the Plain Talk

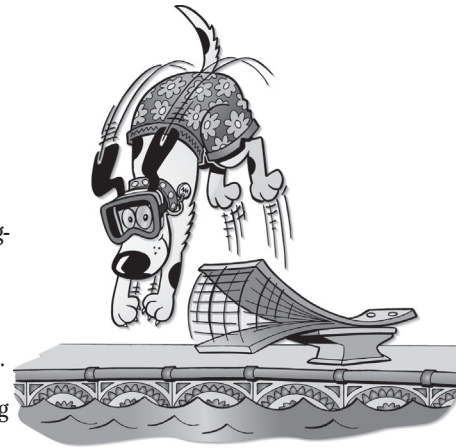
The time is approaching that the canine community of Vermillion has grown to love when the Prentis Park pool opens their doors to our furry friends for the annual Doggie Plunge.

"We want everyone to bring their dog out," said Ryan Baedke of Vermillion Parks and Recreation. "Big, small, medium, we'll take them all. It is \$5 a dog to participate and all that money is donated to the Humane Society in Yankton."

The event will take place Friday the 21 from 5-7 p.m. "I want to say this is the fifth year of it," Baedke said. "It has really grown. The first year we had a handful of dogs and the people enjoyed it. A lot of people called us after the fact asking if we do this all the time and no, it's just once a year because it does fill our pool with a lot of dog hair. The next year it just exploded and every year it seems to be more and more. It has become one of the events that the public really looks forward to in town."

According to Baedke it is an ideal, safe environment for dogs to have a great time.

"The pets can get out and swim in clean water and it's really safe," he said. "We have lifeguards on hand. The dogs get to play with other dogs. We've never had an incident with a dog fight or anything like that. It's just a great, fun event."



Baedke himself said he plans on bringing his pooch pals.

"I have two dogs," he said. "They didn't come last year because one of them just had surgery but they're coming this year. I do have one dog that does not swim very well. She was a rescue dog. She's not afraid of water, she just never had the opportunity to learn how to swim properly and one of the lifeguards did jump in and save her. I had already told the guard that she couldn't swim. The guard saw her fall in after leaning over the edge. The guards are there not only to rescue the owners but the dogs as well."

Though the lifeguards are there, Baedke said owners should still be careful to supervise their pets to keep a safe and fun environment for everybody.

"If you know your dog doesn't swim well stick to the wading pool area unless you're planning on being in the water with your dog," he

said. "The water does get deep for a lot of dogs. You have to be a pretty big dog to put your paws on the side of the pool and stand."

"Another tip I have is make sure your dog goes to the bathroom prior to coming to the pool so we don't have any accidents on the deck to clean up," Baedke continued.

"Owners are responsible to clean up after their dog. We provide bags and cleaning material if there's an accident. If your dog is aggressive maybe this isn't the best place for them because there are kids that come. It's a family outing to come swim with the dog in the pool."

The Doggie Plunge comes at the end of a successful summer of splashing and swimming for all of Vermillion and the Parks and Rec. is ready to move on to the next phase.

"Starting the 22 the pool will be drained and we'll clean it for the year and then it will reopen next year," Baedke said. "We're anticipating construction beginning early in 2016 over there but we will still have our current pool for one more summer so we will never not have a pool."

For more information on the Doggie Plunge or other Vermillion Parks and Rec. events visit [www.vermillionparksandrec.com](http://www.vermillionparksandrec.com).

# What's Happening At Newton Hills and Good Earth

BY: GIANNA HARTY AND CORTNEY REEDY

This weekend at Newton Hills we are blasting off into space! On Friday, August 21st at 8:30 pm we will be showing a movie at the amphitheater. Saturday, August 22nd at 10 am we are starting off the day with Stars in the Morning. This will give a chance to check out the telescopes in the light of day and learn some constellations to find after the sun goes down. At 1pm

we will be putting some star knowledge to use, among other techniques, for Orienteering 101. When 3pm rolls around, you can find us talking about What Makes up Space and doing a craft. Then at 5pm, we will meet for the Solar System Challenge, a fun game to learn more about the planets. In the evening we will show a movie at 8:30 pm at the amphitheater. Finally we will end the day with Newton Hills Night Sky at 9:30pm. Meet us out at the double shelters to look at the stars

and planets through the telescope, weather permitting. On Sunday, August 23rd you are welcome join in a non-denominational worship service at 9 am at the amphitheater. Come as you are, all are welcome, and refreshments will be provided.

The entertainment is heating up at Good Earth State Park at Blood Run! From starry nights to murder and mayhem, it's fun for everyone! On August 21st at 7 pm, join us for a guided hike and learn about the native grasses, trees, and wildlife.

Find out how it became our newest state park. Food will be cooked over the campfire at Welcome to Good Earth! Then at 9 pm join a guest park naturalist for a night by the campfire and view constellations through a telescope! Learn a few constellation, star and planet stories from cultures all over the world at Campfires and Constellations. August 22nd at 11 am the day is heating up with a Riddle Hike. Riddle me this, riddle me that, riddle me hike! Come journey through this riddled

landscape and search for the answers riddled throughout Good Earth State Park! Then at 4 pm it is cooling off for Murder Mystery. Murder, mystery, and mayhem await you in this natural tale of who killed whom and where. (No animals or people are harmed in this interactive experience.) The weekend ends but the fun continues August 23rd for Colorful Confusion at 3 pm. Greens, reds, yellows, oh my! Take a colorful journey and discover how animals use color to hide or stand out.

If you have any questions about the park or the programs for this coming weekend, do not hesitate to give us a call at (605) 987-2263 or email [newtonhills@state.sd.us](mailto:newtonhills@state.sd.us). More info including an event schedule may also be found online at [www.gfp.sd.gov](http://www.gfp.sd.gov). If you would like to receive weekly email updates on programming at the park, like us on Facebook, or send an email to [newtonhills@state.sd.us](mailto:newtonhills@state.sd.us). The staff at Newton Hills and Good Earth looks forward to seeing you at the park this summer!

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