

YALC changes lives of illiterate adults

By Huma Sheikh

Higher level grade requirements discourage adults to be part of literacy programs but at the Yankton Area Literacy Council (YALC), adults who cannot read beyond a third-grade level are welcome.

"Yankton adults don't need a driver's license to get in the program," said Ms. Bev Calvert, YALC program coordinator. "We understand they can't get a driver's license without reading and writing skills."

This is one of the major successes of YALC. Ninety three percent of

adults in Yankton County are trained in reading, writing and speaking English as a second language. In Clay County, 6 percent of adult learners are American while in Bon Homme, the percentage of Americans stands at eight. All other adults are ESL learners. In a 2003 assessment, more than 550 Clay County adults lacked basic literacy skills.

Students work individually with a tutor for a minimum of two hours per week. None of the students are charged. Tutors are volunteers. Students and tutors set up times and locations to meet at the Yankton office.

"Students start at a lower level and do assignments. Their progress is assessed for about a half-hour by their tutors each time they meet," said Calvert. "We have been blessed in Yankton. We have some wonderful teachers in Yankton."

YALC is planning on coming to Vermillion.

"We are trying to set up for readings in Vermillion if we find a small location and funding will be best to go along with it. We buy books for students and each book costs about \$25-30," she said.

Community programs are held in malls and libraries to encourage kids

to read so that they force their parents to read.

YALC also holds literacy programs in Yankton County and surrounding areas to inform people about their literacy activities. In September, a week-long 'Adult Education and Family Literacy Week' was held in Yankton to remind people that YALC helps students of any educational background to improve their literacy throughout the year. The second annual "Scrabble Tournament Spellebrate for a Good Cause" Scrabble tournament is set for Jan. 29, 2012, to raise funds for and awareness about the program.

Brochures are also issued to get the message out about the YALC. People who wish to volunteer or know someone in need of literacy services complete the form at the end of the brochure and send it back to the YALC. The brochures are available at the Yankton library and YALC office.

YALC is a volunteer-based organization founded in 1987. It organizes literacy programs in Yankton, Bon Homme, Charles Mix and Clay counties. Its work is funded by United Way and Volunteer Services of Greater Yankton and by community fundraisers.

'Art Soup' exhibition showcases USD artists

The John A. Day Gallery in the Warren M. Lee Center for Fine Arts will present a Bachelor of Fine Arts graduation exhibition, "Art Soup," by University of South Dakota students Molly O'Connor, Ronald Jenkins and Kristen Ericsson. The exhibition will be on display Dec. 1-9 with an opening reception for the artists scheduled from 7 to 9 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 9 at the Day Gallery.

O'Connor is a graphic design major from Vermillion. Her work focuses on the importance of visual communication in fashion and design. Her work is also an exploration of the psychology of what one wears and the way in which one uses clothing to both mask and reveal. O'Connor will graduate in December and looks forward to continuing her work as a graphic designer.

Jenkins, a fine arts major

with an emphasis in printmaking, is from Sioux City, IA. After traveling extensively, he settled in North Sioux City, S.D., and began his art studies at the University of South Dakota. He plans to continue to travel, always seeking the inspiration of new horizons.

Ericsson's work includes wood-fired ceramics and mixed media drawings. A native of Madison, she is inspired by everyday processes and the visible history these overlooked cycles leave behind. She will be attending graduate school in January to become a counselor, using art as a form of therapy in her practice.

"Art Soup" is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. For more information, please contact gallery director Alison Erazmus at Alison.Erazmus@usd.edu, or (605) 677-3177.

USD Theatre sets the stage for Tony Award-winning 'Avenue Q'

The University of South Dakota Department of Theatre presents the one-of-a-kind musical comedy, "Avenue Q," Dec. 1-5 in the Wayne S. Knutson Theatre of the Warren M. Lee Center for the Fine Arts.

"Avenue Q" is a Tony Award-winning production that combines puppets and live performers in a story that addresses issues like unemployment, relationships and racism. The action focuses on Princeton (Josh Kolb of Loveland, CO), a recent college graduate who ventures to New York City. Unemployed, Princeton can only afford to live on Avenue Q, an unusual neighborhood and home to some extraordinary characters, including Brian (Cody Strand of Brandon), a man who dreams of becoming a standup-comic; Christmas Eve (Jessie Atkinson of Sioux City, IA), Brian's fiancée and a therapist with no patients; Kate Monster (Eleanor Petersen of Valentine, NE), a kindergarten teaching assistant; roommates Rod (Steve Schaeffer of Sioux Falls) and Nicky (Tim Huggenburger of Sioux City, IA); Trekki Monster (Gabriel Gomez of Fargo), a surly, computer-surfing recluse; and the building superintendent, Gary Coleman (Kendra Bolan of Lincoln, NE.).

The cast of "Avenue Q" trained in puppet technique



Eleanor Petersen as Kate Monster; Kendra Bolan as Gary Coleman; and Josh Kolb as Princeton rehearse a scene for the University of South Dakota Department of Theatre's upcoming production of "Avenue Q," Dec. 1-5 in the Wayne S. Knutson Theatre. Although the musical contains cute puppets, it is important to note that the play contains adult situations and strong language and is not appropriate for children.

(Photo by David Lias)

Officials urge James River Valley residents to be flood-smart

Some stretches of the James River remain well above flood stage as winter nears, and state officials are urging residents in or near the flood plain to continue taking steps to protect themselves and their property.

Officials with the state Departments of Environment and Natural Resources, Agriculture and Public Safety say the James River could remain above flood stage as the winter freeze arrives, setting the stage for more flooding next spring.

Information from DENR shows that in the past three years, the James River has dropped below flood stage by fall. This year, the James River continues to run as much as three and one-half feet above flood stage. That curtails drainage of tributaries throughout the river basin, leaving standing water in sloughs and low spots entering the winter freeze.

"Obviously, if the river is at or above flood stage going into winter, the likelihood of high water levels and flooding next spring is increased," said Public Safety Secretary Trevor Jones. "Residents of the river valley should be aware of the river flows and take steps to protect themselves and their property through the winter and into next spring."

Assessing future need for sandbags or other flood-protection measures and identifying where to obtain those materials would be an important preparatory step for those in or near the river valley. Other steps include checking on the sump pump if one is in use, considering a battery-operated backup pump or obtaining a portable electrical generator, keeping furniture and other valuable items safely out of flood areas and making sure valuable papers and records are stored in a waterproof area.

Residents should also pay

close attention to changing weather conditions and water levels and be especially aware of road conditions when traveling through flooded areas. Some roads may remain flooded or saturated and impassable for an extended period of time, and residents are encouraged to prepare for lack of normal access and travel routes in some areas.

The James River has flooded several times in recent years and has been out of its banks for much of this year, much of the public infrastructure has been moved from the flood plain, and most residents have moved their property to higher ground. Agriculture Secretary Walt Bones says operators of farms and ranches in the area should be cautious about moving any machinery or livestock back into the flood plain.

"The best safety message is, if you are out of the flood plain, please don't put yourself back into a dangerous situation," Bones said. "High water conditions could be around for a long time. We know producers have suffered through a long stretch of flooding. It is really frustrating. We just encourage everyone to remain vigilant and make safe, smart choices."

Higher than normal releases from the Jamestown and Pipestem dams in North Dakota have contributed to the high flows on the James River in 2011. While much of the fall was dry in South Dakota, parts of North Dakota had above-normal rainfall. That prevented the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from reducing releases from the two dams until recently. Because it can take a month or more for water in the James River to move through South Dakota, it's uncertain whether the recently reduced flows will significantly lower the chances of flooding next spring.

with two professional puppeteers: Douglas Strich, a USD alum who is employed at the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre in New York City; and Jennifer Barnhart, a professional actress and puppeteer who was also a member of the original

Broadway cast of "Avenue Q." Because of mature themes and strong language, "Avenue Q" is not appropriate for children. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 1-3 and Dec. 5 with a matinee show at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 4 in the Wayne S. Knutson Theatre on the USD

campus. Tickets (\$15 adults, \$9 K-12 & non-USD students with ID, and \$4 USD students with I.D.) can be reserved from noon to 5 p.m. starting Monday, Nov. 21 by calling the USD Theatre Box Office at (605) 677-5400 or by going online at www.usd.edu/theatre.



Pictured are Brenda George and the Poker Alice Band at Gayville Hall, from left, Larry Rohrer, Brenda George, and Owen DeJong.

A Poker Alice Christmas at Gayville

Gayville Hall presents "A Poker Alice Christmas," starring the Poker Alice Band and country western singer Brenda George, at 8 p.m. on Saturday, December 3, at Gayville.

The veteran band from rural Clay County, founded more than two decades ago, will play seasonal favorites as well as selections from its repertoire of western swing, country, jump blues and pop, according to Gayville Hall proprietor Doug Sharples.

George, of Avon, sang with Poker Alice in the late 1980s and has reunited with the band

several times annually at Gayville Hall since 2003.

Poker Alice co-founder Nick Schwebach sings and plays lead and steel guitars. Owen DeJong, the widely known classical music host on S.D. Public Radio, plays the fiddle. Both are from rural Wakonda.

Public broadcaster Larry Rohrer, also of rural Wakonda, sings and plays bass in the band. Its other members, both of rural Beresford, are Dennis Jensen on guitar and vocals and Al Remund on drums.

Gayville Hall is at 502 Washington Street in Gayville.

St. Lucia celebration is Dec. 10

Dalesburg Scandinavian Association welcomes everyone to its 34th Celebration of the St. Lucia Tradition on Saturday, Dec. 10 at 3 p.m. at Dalesburg Lutheran Church, 30595 University Road, rural Vermillion.

This year's celebration will feature a Lucia Court of five girls. One girl will be crowned Lucia for the

evening. There will be a program with a Scandinavian theme and a buffet of Scandinavian food. A freewill collection will go to area food pantries.

The celebration remembers the generosity and commitment of St. Lucia to those in need and to her faith. For information, call 605-253-2575.

OBITUARIES

Dennis Ireland

Funeral services for Dennis K. Ireland, 60, of Soldotna, AK and formerly of Scotland, will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 3 at the United Methodist Church of Scotland. Interment will follow in Rosehill Cemetery, Scotland.

Visitation will be held on Friday from 4 until 9 p.m. at the Goglin Funeral Home in Scotland, during which time the family will be present from 7 p.m. to greet visitors. Dennis passed away on Sunday, Nov. 20, 2011 at his residence in Soldotna.

Online condolences may be sent and service information may be viewed at www.goglinfh.com. Dennis is the father of long-time Vermillion resident, Patrick Ireland, who may be contacted at 4701 28th Ave., Astoria, NY 11103.

Subscribe Today! Call 624-4429

Celebration of the St. Lucia Tradition
3 p.m. Saturday Dec. 10
 Dalesburg Lutheran Church
 30595 University Rd.
 rural Vermillion
 Scandinavian Program
 and Buffet
 Freewill Collection for Area
 Food Pantries
For Information, Call 605-253-2575

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FARMLAND FOR SALE
Elk Point, South Dakota
 308 total dry land acres, approximately 294 tillable acres located in Township Ninety (90) North, Union County, South Dakota. Property is approximately 15 minutes North of Sioux City, Iowa on I-29 along the Big Sioux River.
FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REQUEST A BID PACKAGE
 contact Doug Brown at 402-431-5265 or Dave Wilwerding at 402-498-2224.
Bidding will close December 16, 2011.