

## Tanager Of The Week



Vermillion High School senior Erika Moen took home two superior ranks and two medals from this year's oral interpretation state festival last weekend in Sturgis. For her efforts she has been named this week's Tanager of the week.

ELYSE BRIGHTMAN/  
FOR THE PLAIN TALK

### Performing Without Pressure, Moen Succeeds At Oral Interp

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN  
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Erika Moen wanted to try her hand at performing without the pressure of a big audience watching, so she stumbled upon oral interpretation.

"It's just kind of fun for people like me who don't really want to do theater," said the Vermillion High School student. "We don't necessarily want to perform in front of a huge audience and do plays and put in that time commitment, but then it's nice to be able to do a smaller version of it in terms of just being able to focus on a really small part of a piece and just delve really deep into that and get experience that way."

And last weekend, Moen won two superior ranks and two medals at the state oral interpretation festival in Sturgis naming her this week's Tanager of the Week. "She really works hard," the VHS oral interp coach Mary Bagley. "(She's) very smart. She was always asking when she could come in and practice her piece and she always took notes really well. I'd give her some pointers and then the next time she came and worked with me she always had worked on those and improved and it paid off. She did really well."

For high school oral interp, participants have a choice to compete in seven different categories: poetry, humorous, serious, oratory, duet, reader's theater and story tell.

In order to win a medal the performer needs to be awarded a superior rank by two of the three judges watching.

"It's basically an activity where you find a piece — like a very small piece, it can be from a book, from a play, a poem or something like that — and then you cut it down to under 10 minutes and then you just perform it," Moen said. "It's kind of mini theater, I like to call it, but, there's different rules to it. You don't have props, you don't have costumes, and you're not allowed to touch each other if there are other actors, so it's just sort of different, but it's kind of the same premise as theater."

Most of the categories are performed individually, but there are two with more than one performer. Moen competed in the oratory and reader's theater categories, meaning she earned superior rank, and medals, in each of the events she performed.

"Oratory is any kind of persuasive essay or speech that has been written or presented by someone and then the student takes that and presents it," Bagley said. "Reader's theater has up to six (performers), it doesn't have to be six, but it's three to six students. The group that Erika was in had four students in it. It can be any kind of literature that they put in to this 10-minute format and they divide the piece up so they all have a part to speak."

The oral interp season takes place during the fall and VHS competes at different tournaments that all leads up to the state festival at the beginning of December. According to Moen, she earned superior or superior plus as most tournaments.

"(The season) went really well this year," she said. "My reader's theater we did really well and got superior rank or superior plus at most tournaments, same

with my oratory."

Moen also participates in a number of extracurricular activities at VHS including debate team, which helped her transition into oral interp.

"I joined debate my 8th grade year," she said. "Debate and oral interp tend to overlap a lot, there are a lot of the same people in both events, and oral interp kind of carries on during the debate season. I kind of knew about it, but I'd never really tried it, so my freshman year, when I came to high school, I wanted to get involved in more activities, try something new, and oral interp just seemed like a good activity without the stress of performing in front of large audiences, but still gain a taste of theater, so I tried it."

She also participates in quiz bowl, young Democrats, student council, NHS and theater as part of the stage crew.

*If you know a high school student deserving of recognition in Tanager activities, suggestions for Tanager of the Week can be sent to Elyse Brightman at elyse.brightman@plaintalk.net or by calling 605-624-4429.*



VMS Students show off their 8Up projects.

COURTESY PHOTO

## VMS Eighth Grade Students Upcycle For 8Up

BY NATASHA GAULT  
For The Plain Talk

8Up is an upcycling project and community display that has been developed by the Eighth Grade Students at Vermillion Middle School. The project was completed as part of the Eighth Grade Science curriculum on Climate and Climate Change. The 8Up project encouraged students to think creatively about reusing recyclables and waste materials. Students were then challenged to upcycle used items into something useful, beautiful, and inspirational to others.

Trevor Tarr and his family recycled a twenty-year old wooden Missouri River boat dock into a piece of furniture. Trevor Tarr explained that, "We recycled it because it would have just been thrown away and that would be wasteful." Trevor shared that, "It was difficult to figure out what to make it into so that it would be useful. We were happy when it was done and it looks good."

Ashlyn Bickett worked with her Grandfather to make one-hundred-year-old barn wood into Christmas tree decorations. Ashlyn learned that barn wood was cut in a very specific way so that water would run off of the wood. Ashlyn explains that, "My grandpa knows a lot about woodworking and I had never built anything with him before. It is cool to think that not a lot of people were around when that wood was made."

Ayden Lewison and Logan Augustine recycled an oil drum into a

bench. During the upcycle process, Ayden and Logan used a metal saw, power washer, and other building tools. Ayden explained the experience, "It was a good to take something that would have gone to the scrap pile and make it into something that someone could use. We couldn't have done it without my dad because no one else would let two thirteen years olds use power tools."

Dalan Haines and his family worked together to upcycle seventy plastic shopping bags into a rug. "My family and I were looking for a way to upcycle plastic bags because we had a lot of them, so we found a website that had a plan to make a circular rug. We decided to give it a try," explained Dalan. The Haines family cut plastic bags down the seams, folded and braided them while watching Netflix together. Dalan described the experience as positive and that, "It was fun to do!"

South Dakota Science Content Standards guide Eighth Grade climate change learning. At the eighth grade level, students are required to:

- Construct an argument supported by evidence for how increases in human population and per capita consumption of natural resources impact Earth's systems.

- Ask questions to clarify evidence of the factors that may have caused a change in global temperatures over the past century.

Eighth Grade student, Morgan Kerkman, explains that carbon dioxide emissions come from fossil fuel use, such as coal being burned to produce energy. Morgan shared that, "Carbon

dioxide emissions are causing the earth to warm up and the climate to change. This is bad because the ice caps are melting and species are going extinct." Morgan offers this advice, "We can cut down on our carbon emissions by reusing things, recycling things, and cutting back on our packaging."

VMS Eighth Grade students studied statistical data regarding carbon emissions, such as data provided by the National Resource Defense Council (NRDC). The NRDC Data establishes that most people produce 4.4 pounds of trash per day that results in about 1.5 tons of solid waste per year. By diverting 75 percent of the nation's waste, including municipal and construction and demolition waste, our nation would reduce emissions by 276 million metric tons by 2030, or the equivalent of eliminating emissions from 72 coal-fired power plants or taking 50 million cars off the road. Source: <http://www.nrdc.org/business/guides/recyclingreport.asp>.

Eighth Grade student, Libby Gregg, clarifies how waste could be diverted, "We could take our waste and do something different with it instead of throwing it away. We can take the waste to the recycling center or upcycle it into something new." Eighth Grader student, Signe West, offered the following advice, "It is not that hard. You just have to think about your decisions."

*The 8Up projects and recycling data will be displayed at the Vermillion Public Library from Saturday, Dec. 12 through Dec. 23, 2015.*

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