

Great Turnout For Tour Of Homes

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

The Clay County Historical Society had another successful Tour of Homes last week as four homes were opened by gracious hosts to share stories and traditions. "They were all spectacular," Wess Pravecek of the society said. "We had a little mini tour last night where they could go to each other's houses and we had so much fun and then they came back here and we had a glass of wine and some goodies so we kind of let them be all ready last night and relax today because it was all done."

The event was better attended than Pravecek had hoped, especially on the transit bus. "One thing that's great is this year we had a full transit bus," she said. "There were 18 of us on the bus and that is so much fun and everybody enjoys it so much, the convenience of not having to drive. They're a bunch of rowdies and they're all having their hands up to ride next year."

Though the exact numbers were not in yet, Pravecek estimated between 140 and 150 tickets to the Tour of Homes were sold right past when the tour began.

"There was such a burst of ticket sales this afternoon because the weather's good," she said. "The bus came at 4:30 and they were still selling them as I left which is great."

Some changes in this year's tour made it more enjoyable with other improvements planned for future years.

"We had signs for all of the yards this year which was really nice," Pravecek said. "Next year we'll do maps as well."

According to Pravecek everyone learned something on the tour, including the homeowners.

"I met them ahead and they said to me, 'We're hearing from all different kinds of people as they come through and hearing all these things about our houses that we didn't know about,'" she said. "I said that's a gift because you may have the nuts and



SARAH WETZEL/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Santa made a personal appearance at the Austin-Whittemore House during the

bolts of who owned it before you but then you hear about who owned it before that and they had french doors here and that's really cool for the homeowners to hear stories about their homes."

This was true of Carrie and Tony Roerig.

"We actually have run into a lot of people who have known the previous owners and who were friends with their kids so we can really enjoy what they have to say or the experiences they had here," Carrie shared.

"When we moved in we did some remodeling and we ended up replacing that door," Tony said of a certain storm door on the side of the house. "Last year a gentleman came up to us and said he used to live here right after the Kelseys moved and he remembered a K being there for Dr. Kelsey. I didn't remember a door with a K because I thought it was the front door. I talked to my wife about it and we remembered there was a small little K in the middle of the aluminum storm door. We didn't think anything about it. That's one thing I wish we would have kept."

As part of the tour the Roerigs handed out a short biography of Dr. Frances Oldham Kelsey who had lived in their house.

According to this memoriam, Dr. Kelsey was a brilliant and courageous pharmacologist, physician and toxicological researcher.

"In Vermillion, Dr. Kelsey completed her medical

internship, continued her research with her husband, taught at the medical school of the University of South Dakota and practiced medicine throughout the state," the flyer read.

According to the Roerigs, they have been doing less remodeling and more restoring to their home.

"We have been talking a lot about the work we have been doing and how we have been restoring it," Carrie shared. "We haven't really changed the footprint of this house at all. We haven't torn down any walls. We've actually restored a lot of things back to the way they were originally like the cabinets. They were originally a pale yellow."

The Roerigs said they always knew they wanted an older home that they could bring back to life.

"We never wanted to be an older house and make it modern," Carrie said. "We wanted to preserve and kind of keep the footprint. There are some features I wish were more modern like closets that actually have space."

Carrie and Tony live in their historic home with their three young children. Another home on the tour currently belongs to Teresa Stephenson though she hopes to sell it in the near future.

"I haven't put it on the market yet," she said. "I'm going to put it on the market March 1 so this is kind of an effort to do a word-of-mouth thing."

In addition to showing off her house, Stephenson also took the opportunity to share her personal talents with those on the tour.

"I'm a crafter," she said. "I painted the houses, I've taken most of the pictures that are up on the walls, I've done the cross-stitch that's around here and the knitting and quilting. If you walk around you'll see the quilt on the table is one I made. I crocheted the doily that's on the table there. I did that table runner. The tree skirt took me three years. The dragon and dragonfly up there are cross-stitch."

Stephenson teamed up with her friend Caitlin Collier to make her home part of the tour.

"Caitlin talked me into it and said if I did it she would decorate and do the baking," she said. "All I did was show up and bring a meat and cheese plate."

"This house is so fun," Collier said. "Our knitting group has had potlucks here. This house has a great flow all the way through. The downstairs is huge and has this huge. There's a room down there you could probably have a party with 100 people. For people who really like to entertain or for families who have kids growing up it's great. You can't really see out back but it's so nice out there. It's well landscaped and it's just a nice place."

Back at the home, Pravecek felt pleased with the way the evening turned out.

"It was fun to watch everybody come and go and the homeowners were having fun which made me feel really good," she said. "Everybody talked about how someone would tell them a story about their house which I thought was really cool."

Pravecek hopes that people visit the Austin-Whittemore home at least more than just once a year.

"This is a real community home," she said. "We want people to know this house is here and we want people to come through the year and look around, be a part of it."

Christmas On The Missouri: Creating A Community Tradition

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

The religious community in Vermillion now has another thing to look forward to during the holiday season with the second annual 'Christmas on the Missouri' concert this Sunday at 7 p.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints on 20 S. Mickelson Ave.

The concert is free and open to the public. Matthew Fairholm is currently the leader of the Vermillion LDS congregation.

"We were hoping to create a community tradition that helps celebrate Christmas with a Christ-centered focus," he said. "That was our vision. We started last year with just inviting as many people as we could and then we decided to see if we could involve other people. People who showed up to hear the concert wanted to participate so we took advantage of that and it kind of grew and grew."

The event has grown from a single-congregation Christmas concert to a city-wide religious event.

"As of right now we have the choir from the LDS church, the choir from the United Church of Christ, the choir from Trinity Lutheran, a choir from United Methodist and a group from St. Agnes that are all coming and performing," said Mandi Steele, the event's organizer. "It will be a mix of choir pieces and either small ensemble or solo pieces. We have a piano soloist, we have a vocal soloist, an oboe soloist as well as combined men's piece with all the choirs. We're finishing with a combined choir and audience participation Alleluia chorus. That will be awesome. It's going to end up being quite the conglomerate of music. We were very specific that we wanted them all to be sacred in nature, focusing on the birth of Christ. Everyone has chosen some really great songs. I'm really excited about this."

It seems as if the excitement is widespread.

"It actually has been coming together quite well and everyone seems to be extremely excited about this," Steele said. "I have friends at school who are planning on coming who don't even go to any of the churches. They just want to come for a Christ-centered Christmas concert. It's actually been very enlightening to me to see how we can all come together under this common belief in the birth of Jesus Christ and want to celebrate that aspect and really give it the focus that it should be given right now. I think everyone in this community at least recognizes that it's becoming less of a focus. It's nice to see everyone agree that focusing on that is a good idea."

The event comes from cooperation between multiple faiths according to Steele.

"Ultimately thanks to Gretchen Burbach with the United Church of Christ the word got out to other churches mostly because I don't know many other people on that scene and she does," she said. "She was a great help in inviting and seeing who else might be interested. Once she mentioned this person and that person it wasn't that hard. It's a lot of little moving parts that you have to keep track of but it's actually been working really well."

The ultimate goal, according to Fairholm and Steele, is to have a huge annual community event, though the current size is challenging enough.

"It's getting full," Steele said. "We're already having to limit the number of musical pieces from each congregation which is great because there's so many people that want to do that and I want to showcase everyone's talent."

After the musical portion of the evening, guests will enjoy refreshments and nativity displays.

"I have to admit the whole thing was tremendous, beyond my expectations last year," Fairholm said. "I also enjoyed the nativity scenes that were in the cultural hall afterward so it had some art and craft as well as music and it focused on the real spirit of Christmas."

Fairholm hopes that people leave uplifted. "I hope they have a meaningful experience that's focused on the true meaning of Christmas," he said. "Few things do that better than music and song."

Another hope, according to Fairholm, is that this spirit will remain throughout the year.

"People are in need every day of the year and people are in need of helping those in need every day of the year," he said. "Christmas is great because it reminds us of that. The hope is that we can keep it in our hearts every day. I'm grateful that Christmas comes around once a year because it allows us to remember if we have forgotten."

Festival

From Page 1

that are around," Johnson said. "We have to remember that we're a museum not a shop. I like the woodworkers that come. The lacemakers have been continuous every year I've been here. They're all so gracious to come. Some come from Nebraska, Sioux Falls. It's just a nice afternoon."

Various organizations decorated trees including Monday Morning Crafters, Lions Club, Clay County Democrats, Girl Scouts, 4H, United Way of Vermillion, Eagle Nest Dining, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Clay County Relay for Life, St. Agnes School, Alpha Lambda ESA and Civic Council.

Johnson begins months ahead of time preparing for this event.

"It's always fun setting up," she said. "I start making contacts in early summer, sending out my initial letters inviting people to come. I'll put an ad in the paper and things just go from there. I give them an October 15 deadline but I took a reservation last night at 6:30 so if I can find a spot for a table and we have one we just have people come. It's detail-oriented and



SARAH WETZEL/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Dancers wait behind the scenes before they take the stage to dance at the Christmas Festival, held at the W.H.Over Museum last weekend.

labor-intensive, that's how I'd describe getting ready for this festival because we have to be ready to go and I always take one last walk through on Saturday and just enjoy it. It's always so pretty and quiet."

It's all worth it in the end though Johnson was exhausted.

"I just like to see folks come and enjoy the day,"

she said. "Every booth is my favorite. I enjoy seeing the different things people do and how many different crafts there are to be seen in town."

For more information on the W.H. Over Museum visit www.whovermuseum.org.

Holiday Deadlines

Plain Talk deadline for December 25 issue will be Monday, December 21 at 3 p.m. for all display, classified ads & news articles.

Plain Talk deadline for the January 1 issue will be Monday, December 28 at 3 p.m. for all display, classified ads & news articles.

Our offices will close at noon on December 24 and be closed all day on December 25.

Our offices will close at 3 p.m. on December 31 and be closed all day on January 1.



Serving our readers since 1884.
www.plaintalk.net

Vermillion Public Schools Notice:

Reminder: 2nd Semester Bus Passes are due before / on Monday, January 4, 2016.

"FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES OFFICE IS OPEN DURING MOST OF THE HOLIDAY BREAK."



Take Control of YOUR Schedule!

We are hiring CNA's, CMA's, LPN's & RN's

Flexible schedules and shifts are only available through a staffing agency like **Tri-State Nursing**, so why not work when you want, where you want and work for a company that **cares about you**.

- Top Weekly Pay!
- Direct Deposit!
- Health Benefits

Apply Online TODAY at www.tristatenursing.com



"The Professionals with Pride"
800-727-1912

SDCUC announces board nominations open

The South Dakota Corn Utilization Council (SDCUC) is a progressive organization which has visionary and influential producer leadership throughout the state. The 9-member board manages and invests South Dakota's 1-cent per bushel corn checkoff fund.

The SDCUC is announcing director positions that are open in Districts 1, 2 & 7. A SDCUC director's position consists of a three-year term beginning on March 1, 2016. Each director can serve a maximum of two terms, resulting in a six-year director's position.

If interested in seeking a board seat in one of the open districts, you must obtain and file with the corn office a nominating petition. All nominating petitions must contain at least 15 "participating" corn producer signatures from your district. (A "participating" corn producer has not requested a refund of his/her corn assessment since January of 2015). Eligible candidates who wish to seek a director's position cannot have requested a checkoff refund from the SDCUC since January of 2011. Nominating petitions must be returned back to the SDCUC office by 5 p.m. on January 1, 2016.

To request a petition please contact the SDCUC office in writing at 4712 South Technopolis Drive, Sioux Falls, SD 57106 or call 605-334-0100.

If more than one nominating petition is received by the SDCUC office for any district, a special election will be conducted for that district. The elections will be held February 1-5, 2016 at the local extension offices in those counties.

The counties assigned to the districts accepting nominations for director positions are detailed below:

- District 1 – Clay, Lincoln, Turner, Union, Yankton
- District 2 – Lake, Minner, Minnehaha, Moody
- District 7 – Aurora, Beadle, Buffalo, Hand, Hyde, Jerauld, Sanborn