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Jonathan D. Alvis conducts the USD Symphonic Band as it performs "Chester Overture" during the launch of its Winter Tour Concert Sunday afternoon in Slagle Hall's Aalfs Auditorium.

(Photo by David Lias)

Tour valuable tool for USD Symphonic Band

By David Lias

david.lias@plaintalk.net

The weather outside was threatening to become frightful in Vermillion Sunday afternoon. That didn't stop the 57-members of the USD Symphonic Band from performing, as scheduled, that afternoon in Slagle Hall's Aalfs Auditorium. Blizzard conditions did, however, for the band and it's three directors – Dr. Rolph Olson, Dr. Gary Reeves and Dr. Jonathan Alvis – from leaving immediately after the concert for the Black Hills. "We'll be blasting off early in the morning (Monday). We were planning to leave about an hour after the concert and head out the Hills, and we had three concerts scheduled tomorrow

(Monday, Feb. 11) in Rapid City," Olson said. "What we're hoping for now, since I-90 is closed, is that in the morning it will be open and that we can get out there and maybe make our afternoon concert on Monday." The USD Symphonic Band makes such a journey every year to various cities in the region, to perform and hopefully strike a chord with young people. "We do this every year. We recruit in a similar manner to athletics. In addition to sharing good music with high school students, it's a great recruiting tool," Olson said. "We hope that when those students hear our band play, they'll think, 'Gee, I want to be in that band.' If they're interested in coming to USD, then we want them to know what the opportunities are for them to participate in music here."

These on-the-road concerts stoke, in many students, a desire to participate in music on a collegiate level that's already been smoldering. In some instances, however, the performances provide the needed spark among a few high schoolers who hadn't even been contemplating music participation as they plan their studies after graduating. Occasionally, some of the students haven't thought, seriously, about attending USD, Olson said, "but when they hear our band play, they think, 'Ok, maybe I better check that place out. That's pretty cool,' and they'll end up coming here even though they didn't have USD originally on their list. "In addition, it's a neat way for our students to get out and play," he said. In the last four years, the USD

Symphonic Band has toured to schools in the Omaha, NE, Des Moines, IA, and Minneapolis, MN, areas. "And now, we're including the Black Hills. We're trying to reach out a little further than just 50 miles across the border line," Olson said. "We're trying to attract some students from larger, metropolitan areas. "In addition, we do like to make some shorter runs – last year we made some trips out to the Sioux Falls area, and we try to hit some of the smaller schools in the area, too," he said. "We've gone to Beresford, and Akron (IA) and to some other small schools just across the border in Iowa." On the way home to Vermillion from the Black Hills, the USD musicians stopped to perform for high school students in Pierre and at Platte-Geddes.

"Another thing that I try to do is visit the home schools of some of the band members," Olson said. "One of the soloists in the brass group is from Rapid City, and unfortunately, his school is Rapid City Central which was supposed to be first thing in the morning (on Monday), and we're not going to get to play at his home school. Occasionally, I think about that if we have some seniors in the band. We almost always have somebody in the band from a town we're going to play for." If all went as expected according to plans that were revised Sunday afternoon, the Symphonic Band performed at St. Thomas More High School in Rapid City

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Book to bring NMM Main goal of Shooting Sports program: Safety to larger audience

By Travis Gulbrandson

travis.gulbrandson@plaintalk.net

The collection at the National Music Museum (NMM) in Vermillion is known by scholars throughout the world, but thanks to an upcoming book it may become more familiar to the casual music fan, as well. From Feb. 4-11, photographers representing Dorling Kindersley Publishing took pictures of more than 100 of the museum's holdings for a volume to be called, "The Story of Music." "It's great exposure for us," said Dr. Cleveland Johnson, NMM director. "We habitually share pictures of our instruments. That's something that we do all the time, and always have. But most of the

publications that we have worked with in the past are academic publications." Usually, this means a scholar from a very specialized field is seeking very specialized pictures, Johnson said. "We're talking about academic books that have print runs of maybe 300-500," he said. "They're very specialized, and end up in academic libraries or the shelves of other specialists." By comparison, the DK volume could have a print run of up to 19,000, Johnson said. "It's a much bigger audience for our instruments, so obviously, it's a great opportunity to get our instruments out there and to get

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There's all sorts of things for a young person to remember as they take aim at target with a bow and arrow or a BB gun – proper stance, the best way to hold the bow or gun, how to take a steady aim, even how to control one's breathing. One thing, however, trumps everything else in the instruction offered by volunteers to the members of the Clay County Flyers 4-H club – safety. "We have a terrific program of kids who are involved with their parents. Parental involvement is huge," said Randy Hout. "This is a good opportunity for parents and kids to do things together. Safety is our number one concern. Safety is always first, and that is something that we stress, no matter what." Hout appeared to be the person in charge during Sunday's activities at the Clay County Extension building, where local youth were practicing their archery and BB gun shooting

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Emily Rolfes takes aim as she and other members of the Clay County Flyers 4-H club practice archery Sunday in the Extension building in Vermillion.

(Photo by David Lias)



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