

July 2014

'She's a perfect fit'

Ella Wittmuss couldn't escape the fact, as the Monday night rehearsal session for the musical "Oliver!" concluded, that her upcoming portrayal of the story's lead character will mean more than learning lines, songs and dance steps.

As director Callie Hisek began to french braid Ella's long hair, someone plopped a wig into Ella's hands. Once Ella's hair is secured in braids, on goes the wig, and Ella is transformed into Oliver Twist, the gaunt, hungry orphan boy who is the lead character of the Charles Dickens' story.

"Every once in a while, I remember that I'm not a girl in this play," she said. "It's kind of exciting to be playing the part of a boy when in all my past shows I've been a girl."

Ella, the 11-year-old daughter of Alan and Sarah Wittmuss of Vermillion, may be of a tender age, but her local theatre resume is impressive.

She's appeared in last year's Vermillion Community Theatre production of "Robin Hood, Spirit of the Greene." In 2012, she played a supporting role in the musical "Annie," and in the summer of 2011, she took part in the children's theatre production of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory."

She was cast in the VCT's production of "Oklahoma," in 2010.

There's a simple explanation for Ella's rich theatre experience at such a young age.

"After my first play, I thought, 'I really want to do the next one because it was really fun doing it, especially with all of my friends.' So, yeah, I've just always thought it was something I would want to do," she said. "I always like being on stage."

"Oliver!" will be performed at the Vermillion High School Performing Arts Center July 25-28, with performances at 7 p.m. on Friday, Saturday and Monday. There is a 2:30 p.m. matinee on Sunday, July 27. Ticket prices are \$14 for adults, \$7 for students K-12 and free for children five and under.

Ella admits she wasn't familiar with the musical "Oliver!" when auditions were held earlier this summer, but that didn't stop her desire to be cast in that leading role.

"I guess I thought Oliver might be fun ... I kind of aimed for (the character of) Oliver," she said. "When we had the tryouts, I hadn't

really heard of it (the musical), but we got the movie from the library and watched that, and we kind of got a basic idea. After learning more about the musical, I knew I wanted to try out for Oliver."

Director Callie Hisek discovered during auditions that Ella possesses all of the qualities needed to successfully portray the orphan boy.

Volin woman dies in Sunday crash

WAKONDA – A Volin woman died in a one-vehicle crash on 455th Avenue a mile north of Wakonda on Sunday, July 20.

Sharon Faye Watkins, 50, was northbound riding a 2004 Harley Davidson motorcycle. The motorcycle left the roadway on a curve and entered the east ditch, where it crashed. Watkins, who was not wearing a helmet, died at the scene.

No further information is immediately available. The accident happened at 12:37 p.m. Sunday.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating. Clay County Sheriff's Office assisted.

Vermillion Legion Post 1 falls 15-13 after big Dakota Valley comeback

Vermillion Legion Post 1 held a comfortable seven-run lead in the sixth inning, but a big comeback by Dakota Valley Post 319 ended Vermillion's hopes to wrap up the region championship Saturday.

Vermillion lost to Dakota Valley 15-13 at Todd Larson Field in Elk Point, and will return to the field 2 p.m. Sunday to face Dakota Valley again. The winner of Sunday's game will be crowned Region 3B champion and will move on to the state American Legion Baseball Tournament which will be in Tabor July 25-29.

Tanner Anderson reached base four times in the game for Vermillion. He scored two runs and had one RBI. He singled in the first and fifth innings.

Cody Sexton got the win for Dakota Valley. He allowed one run over 3 1/3 innings. Sexton struck out two, walked none and gave up two hits.

Carter Kratz was charged with the loss. He lasted just three innings, walked four, struck out one, and allowed five runs.

Dakota Valley jumped out to an early 2-0 lead in the top of the first. Brady Dam started the rally for Dakota Valley with a single. A stolen base then moved Dam from first to second. Andrew Prochello doubled, scoring Dam. More runs

came home for Post 319 when Prochello scored on an RBI single by Sexton.

Vermillion matched its one-run first inning with one more in the seventh. In the first, Post 1 scored on an RBI single by Anderson, plating Kratz.

August 2014

Vermillion man found guilty of rape, receives 25 year sentence

A Vermillion man has been sentenced to a minimum of 25 years in the state penitentiary for sex-related offenses.

On May 22, David Deal was found guilty by a jury of rape in the first degree and sexual contact with a minor under the age of 16.

On Thursday, July 24, Deal was sentenced to 40 years in the pen, with 15 suspended, for the first count, and 15 years for the second. The sentences will be run concurrently.

He also is required to pay fines for each count, plus court costs, attorney fees and restitution to the victim, as well as follow the requirements of a psychosexual evaluation.

If Deal does not comply with the in-prison sex offender program, he will be required to serve the full 40 years.

Deal was found guilty regarding an incident that involved a 7-year-old girl last summer in Clay County.

When she handed down the sentence, Judge Cheryl Gering said, "For every day of her life ... this will be something that affects (the victim)."

The victim's mother was in the courtroom last week, and said Deal had been a friend of her family.

"The pain you caused (the victim) ... and my family, there is no amount of money that can ever repair that," she said, crying throughout much of her statement.

The woman added that, "I hope that whatever (sentence) you get, you get the help you truly, truly need."

State's attorney Teddi Gertsma urged Gering to give Deal 30 years in jail for the first count and 15 years for the second, to be served consecutively.

Gertsma called putting the 7-year-old on the witness stand during Deal's trial a "heartbreaking" experience.

She said she brought the girl to the courtroom the Friday before the trial began so that she could get acclimated to the environment.

Gertsma said when she spoke to the girl about



Theta rolled past Phi Beta Phi, while Alpha Xi Delta escaped the same semifinal round with a 7-6 win over Alpha Phi.

(Alan Dale)

testifying, the 7-year-old said, "I don't want to remember."

Deal's attorney, public defender Jason Rumpca, said that the trial was necessary because Deal continued to maintain his innocence.

"It's not like he chose to spite her by putting her on the stand," Rumpca said. "It was required."

Citizen uses strong language to describe city council 'oppression'

A Vermillion citizen expressed appreciation to the Vermillion City Council at its meeting Monday night after it approved a zoning change that he favored involving real estate property that he owns. In his brief exchange with alderman, however, Harlow Hatle also indicated he and other property owners in the city have been oppressed by the city in recent months.

He noted that the city's actions were similar to the way African Americans were treated in the South before the Civil Rights movement, and the way Jews were treated in Nazi Germany.

"I sent each of you a letter asking you if you would singly, or collectively, or in any group, come and look at the properties you're talking about dealing with so you could see the real world ... I do own property in each of the wards that you people represent, so I assume that means in some way you represent me,"

Hatle told the aldermen.

He emphasized that hadn't received a phone call from any council member in response to his letter.

"You people work very hard to have unanimous things - if that's just so you can get along, I'm not sure - but I think you ought to make your independent decisions and go from there," Hatle said.

He indicated that he is very much in favor of codes, and told the aldermen that there is an international existing building code. "That should handle some of your problems on windows," he said, "but nobody seems to be interested in that."

"Codes are great, but if I had been a black in the early 1800s, I would hate to go along with your thing of 'it's a code, why are we discussing it?' but you wouldn't have gotten to (discuss it)," Hatle said, pointing to the women on the city council, "because women didn't get to vote or hold office until later."

"Codes are great; I was born in 1941. If I was a Jew in Germany, my mother could have walked me into a shower and I would have been cremated later," he said. "In 1963, when I graduated from college, if I wanted to go to the University of Alabama, the governor would have stood out there and said, 'No you can't; you're a jungle bunny. We don't take you."

"Codes are great, but they're made by people like you, they're enforced by people like you," Hatle said. "Get out and look at the real world. Codes are not the answer to everything."

The city council did not respond to Hatle's remarks.

September 2014

Vermillion High School: Homecoming royalty announced

The 2014 Vermillion High School Royalty Candidates for King: Carter Andre, Jack Brown, Brett Bye, Regan Bye, Andrew Heine, Jonathan Manning.

Candidates for Queen: Jessica Brady, Rachel Finnegan, Hailey Freidel, Victoria Gregoire, Sydney Peters, Teddi Settles.

2014 Homecoming Candleholders:

Men: Peter Banasiak, Timothy Ellison, Jacob Ford, Jefferson Galvin, Kobe Provost, Adam Winslow.

Women: Marley Hanson, Savannah Kirsch, Hope Knebler, Audry Mueller, Megan Zimiga, Katherine Zimmerman.

CONGRATS!

Greek Powder Puff: They got next...next...next!

Most American women grow up not having the opportunity (or they don't purse one) to play football. Don't kid yourself that when given the opportunity women don't embrace the sport like men do.

On Wednesday night the University of South Dakota Greek Week festivities moved to the DakotaDome and Powder Puff took center stage between the four sororities on campus.

When it all ended, the ladies of Kappa Alpha Theta held off a tough and determined Alpha Xi Delta team to capture the title with a 21-19 win.

Theta rolled past Phi Beta Phi, while Alpha Xi Delta escaped the same semifinal round with a 7-6 win over Alpha Phi.

Alpha Phi claimed third place over Pi Beta Phi.

Look for a complete story with interviews and more photos next week in the print edition of The Plain Talk or back here at www.plaintalk.net.

For now...enjoy some of the images from a fantastic night of football...

Lady style.

Vermillion hospitality results in hometown heroics for Sloth

Jonathan Sloth arrived in Vermillion from his native Denmark on Thursday evening and the sophomore jumped right into classes on Friday morning.

Saturday afternoon saw him score the game tying goal for a team that he had not even practiced with.

It was Sloth's goal that would salvage a 1-1 opening day tie for the Vermillion Tanagers against Freeman Academy Saturday afternoon at Cotton Park "I was put in as a midfielder, but I feel that I can play all over the field," Sloth said. "I was all around the field today, even attacking."

"Everyone has been very open to come over to say 'hello' and everybody is nice. Yesterday I felt something (jetlag), but today is good. I have had a great start at school and here on the team."

In the 37th minute, he received a header from freshman Joe Miller, and one-timed it into the back of the net. The crossing shot stayed on the grass, and out of the goalie's outstretched arms.

The Bulldogs of Freeman Academy opened the scoring when William Janssen launched a lazy, looping shot over the head of the Vermillion goalie.

October 2014

Vermillion awarded Community of the Year

Vermillion was named Large Community of the Year by Gov. Dennis Daugaard on Tuesday evening in Sioux Falls at the Governor's Economic Development Conference.

Mayor Jack Powell, USD President James Abbott, and Vermillion Area Chamber and Development Company (VCDC) President Gerry Tracy accepted the award on behalf of the community.

Schenk of Irene, Vermillion's Hanson win SD pageant crowns

BRANDON – The 2015 Miss South Dakota USA and Miss South Dakota Teen USA Pageants took place Sunday at the Brandon Valley Performing Arts Center in Brandon.

A large crowd filled the Performing Arts Center on Sunday evening for the pageant finals, where the

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