



Matthew Moen will appear at the Vermillion Public Library to present his new book: Dumb Bunnies and Expecting Cats.

ZACH WETZEL / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

## Cool, School Cats

By Zach Wetzel

For the Plain Talk

Cat lovers of all ages cannot miss Matthew Moen's presentation of his new book: Dumb Bunnies and Expecting Cats at the Vermillion Public Library.

According to a library advertisement, this exclusive event will take place on Wednesday, February 4th at 7 p.m. in the Kozak Community Room.

The presentation is part of the Artists and Authors Series at the library.

Moen is a local author as well as a professor at the University of South Dakota.

Susan Heggstad, the Programming Coordinator for the Library, explained that the Artists and Authors series has been around for a couple of years. The series occurs on the first Wednesday of each month, usually from 7-8 p.m.

Many of the local artists and authors whose works have been showcased in the series include: Nancy Losacker, Norma Wilson, Jerry Wilson, Ariadne Albright, Leigh Ann Roripaugh, Michele Mechling, Fred Arroyo, and Alice Alexandrescu.

During Moen's presentation, he will read selections from Dumb Bunnies and Expecting Cats, and will also answer questions from the audience.

"Professor Moen will have copies of his book available for sale and for signing, and a portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Bangor, Maine, and SD Heartland Humane Society," said Heggstad.

A children's play area is available in the library for families with younger children who wish to attend the event.

According to Heggstad, there will be many exciting upcoming events at the library. On February 7th there will be an Altered Book Workshop and on February 11th there will be a screening of the film 12 Years a Slave.

Matthew Moen is very excited to present his book at the Public Library.

"This should be really fun. That's the goal," said Moen.

Moen's presentations typically feature readings, photos, signings, and questions from the audience.

Moen refers to Dumb Bunnies as a type of crossover book. Prior to Dumb Bunnies, Moen authored and co-authored many academic books.

Moen is currently the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at USD.

Moen is by training a political scientist. He wanted to try his hand at creative writing, so he decided to write Dumb Bunnies.

Dumb Bunnies and Expecting Cats is technically a creative nonfiction book. It is a true story.

"The creative aspect of the book involves the story of the cat and being able to look at things from a cat's perspective," Moen explained.

According to Moen, it was a time-consuming process to put the book together but was certainly worth the effort.

Moen has done various book signings and readings at Prairie Pages and at the Festival of Books. He also presented his book at the Lifelong Learning Institute in Sioux Falls. Moen's family has had two cats for over twenty-five years. This book is the story of Moen's cats and the adventures they have had together over the years.

"This is very similar to Marley and Me, except it's the cat version," said Moen.

"Hopefully people get a kick out of this book. It's intended to be pretty light and humorous, and is filled with observational humor."

The presentation at the library will focus mainly on Dumb Bunnies and Expecting Cats.

According to Moen, his book is for the cat lover, for the community, and for fun.

For more information on the Artists and Authors series or other upcoming library events, visit [www.vermillionpubliclibrary.org](http://www.vermillionpubliclibrary.org).

level last year.

"It's pronounced 'bobay-on' from a different list called the thousand-word list," he said.

Anna tried her hand at that word on a challenge from Hari.

She spelled it 'BOBBEJAAND.'

"No, just an N at the end," Hari said. "BOBBEJAAN is how you spell it. That's one word I got at state and I spelled it right."

"The word I spelled wrong was when we ran out of all the words," Hari recounted. "We went through 48 rounds. Me and the other people were still in because we were all really good. Finally they found a different list that I had never studied at all. I got the first word right. The second word was really complicated. It was 15 letters."

"In the 450 word list, there was one word that was from another language," Teo said. "It was wunderkind. It's German."

Teo has a strategy to help him with his spelling. "I like to spell ragout," he said. "I thought I was going to get that wrong but then I remembered. It's spelled more like rag-out so I spelled it like that."

Sometimes spellers run into problems with pronunciation.

"There was this one time in the state spelling bee where the word was pronounced 'feet,'" Hari said. "I said FETE and they said correct. But there's also FEAT and FEET."

"I was in the spelling

bee last year too and I went up pretty high," Anna said. "I was pretty disappointed that I didn't make it because the person saying the words pronounced one of them kind of weird so I heard it wrong so I spelled it wrong."

Luckily Anna was given another chance due to the mispronunciation.

Sometimes difficulties come just from bad luck.

"It's just the luck of the draw," Hari said. "They pick a word out of this big dictionary. You have to study that."

The Jolley students remember how frustrating it can be when you know how to spell words that other students are given.

"The word I got was heuristic because both of them got out," Hari said. "I got that one right. Then she said signet."

"I was really disappointed because I knew how to spell both of those," Anna remembered.

Just as the words seem to get harder over the years of the spelling bee, the bee itself is changing.

"From this year all the way back you didn't have

## The Heartbeat of Vermillion Meet Marty Nygren

By Katie Clausen

For the Plain Talk

Marty Nygren's enthusiasm for the community is not just limited to a few endeavors here and there; being the definition of a community member encompasses who he is at his core.

"I graduated from Vermillion High School; we moved here when I was six," Nygren said. "And I joined the Army when I was 17." Serving his country in the military and his community as a small business owner are what keeps him busy these days, but during his youth Nygren even spent time on the USD campus, going to classes until the National Guard took him on an adventure of a different caliber.

"I did a little bit of college at USD," Nygren said. "I was going to college in 2000, and we ended up going to Germany with The Guard for an annual training. Now I've been there three times."

The Guard allowed Nygren to become well-traveled. He was activated in 2003 and spent most of that time guarding air force bases. While he now manages Nygren's True Value at 9 Court St., he took an interesting path during his youth to get there.

"At that time I was with the 665th maintenance company in Mitchell," Nygren said. "I just transferred to Wagner to the 155th engineer battalion about a year ago."

Nygren eventually spent time in the Middle East in 2011 and 2012 and is still active. He is currently a member of the local VFW chapter, in addition to being part of programs that assist military families with important services at funerals and the local Legion. Nygren is the Junior Vice Commander at the VFW, where they host meetings once a month.

"We raise funds and try to donate it back to the community," Nygren said.



Marty Nygren keeps adding inventory to his hardware store, Nygren's True Value, just as he continues adding community involvement to his plate. He is active with the South Dakota National Guard, the VFW, and youth athletics.

KATIE CLAUSEN / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

"It's a great organization."

Making quite the career for himself while serving, Nygren has moved up in rank since first joining during High School.

"I'll have completed 17 years in March and I'll do at least 20 years," Nygren said. "It's about the camaraderie of the military and I enjoy giving back, I enjoy what I do. It's been good to me and good to my family."

While being enlisted and serving our country is something clearly near and dear to Nygren's heart, his family is his number one priority. His wife Tresa helped manage the hardware store during his deployment. His sons Nolan, 6, and Mason, 3, may choose to be in the hardware business someday, but for the time being, the boys are busy at St. Agnes School and participating in youth wrestling.

"Last year was our first year doing youth wrestling," Nygren said.

Nygren has since been asked to be the president of the Vermillion Youth Wrestling Club.

"This is my first year," Nygren said. "My goal is to try to get more

memberships and keep the kids going and keep them going to tournaments and things like that."

Tournaments keep the Nygren family busy, but like many youth athletic programs, Nygren feels as though the young athletes grow personally from being involved in the program.

"Wrestling is a tough sport and an individual sport," Nygren said. "It gives them a lot of discipline and helps them mature. They all seem to love it."

During the week, it's all about helping Vermillion's patrons. Nygren's True Value is a one stop shop for any home improvement needs, tools, lawn and garden items, repair items and even toys.

Being in the hardware business is part of who Nygren is, too.

"Dad opened it in 1988," Nygren said. "I came on as manager in 2005, and I'm the third generation in this business."

Serving Vermillion as a small business owner is something Nygren truly enjoys.

**For an extended version of this story please visit [www.plaintalk.net](http://www.plaintalk.net)**

## SPELL

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too."

Practice, practice, practice is something that all three students agree is vital.

"I just studied a lot and I worked really hard on it every single night," Anna said. "There's a list and it's organized by language of origin. I just go through them all and I make flash cards for a lot of them too."

The regional competition will be on the birthday of Anna's brother this year.

"I'm still going to do it but the night before he's having a sleepover so I'm probably just going to stay up all night studying," she said. "My grandparents are both coming for my brother's birthday so they'll both be there to see me too."

According to the Scripp's National Spelling Bee website, national winners have conquered using words like stichomythia (2014), knaidel (2013), and guetapens (2012).

Teo, Anna and Hari have had their share of difficult words.

Teo's hardest word to date is ignominious. "I got out on mellifluous," Anna said. "I'm going to remember how to spell it forever now."

Hari had a particularly difficult word which he encountered at the state

more words," he said. "There's another list that has more pages than the 450 word list."

"Plus students from other cities are coming right here to Vermillion. I'm worried because all the kids here are smart kids so all the smart kids from all the cities are going to come here and I don't know if I'm that smart."

"You are," Anna reassured him.

Hari understands that there is no shame in struggling because the competition is stiff.

"Don't get yourself down because there were all these sixth graders and eighth graders in the regional spelling bee," he said. "I was almost the youngest last year."

As these students pointed out, spelling can be a hobby as well as a school subject.

"When I was a fourth-grader I liked typing up

random words," Hari said. "I came up with the word fraunhofer. I said it's a German philosopher. Sometimes I'll make up a word like pulveritated and find out it's a real word."

This actually turned out to be the case with fraunhofer.

According to Dictionary.com, Joseph von Fraunhofer was a German optician and physicist.

"My four year old sister loves making up words," Anna said. "Her word for 'warm' is adjockley. She'll say 'I'm so adjockley tonight.' She makes up a bunch of other words too. Sometimes I use them."

"I say some random words sometimes like pulveritated or crackididated," Hari said. "It always ends in an -itated for some reason."

For more information on the spelling bee visit [calendar.usd.edu](http://calendar.usd.edu).

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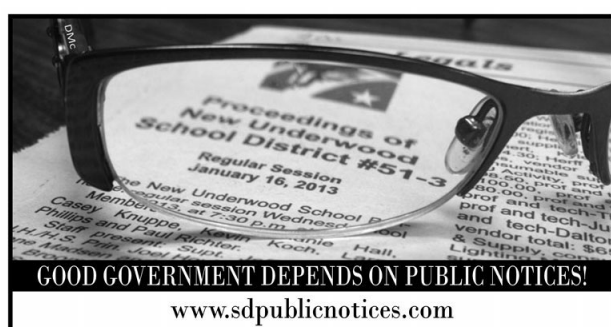
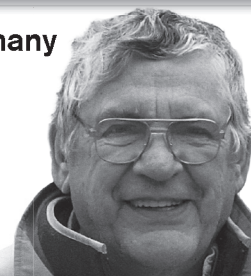
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## Thank you from The Family of Dean Ticknor

The family of Dean Ticknor would like to thank everyone for the love and support shown to us during the loss of our loved one. Dean's memorial is going to the Vermillion Weekend Backpack Program. Many thanks go to the Vermillion Police Department, EMT's, Vermillion Fire Department, Sanford Hospital, Pastor Rick Pittenger, Hansen Funeral Home, VFW Auxiliary, the Birthday Club, and United Methodist Women. Our husband, dad, grandpa, and brother will be missed forever but memories of him will live on in our hearts.

Warm Regards,  
Berniece Ticknor, Don & Audrey Ticknor  
Duane & Mary Ticknor, Tim & Patty Schwasinger