



BEFORE: The first ever Firebird Dance Clinic saw members of the Vermillion High School Inferno dance team work with kids in grades K-4 on Saturday, above, and the work led to some serious attitude and effort, left.

ALAN DALE / THE PLAIN TALK

First Firebird Clinic Delivers the Dance

By Alan Dale
The Plain Talk

Not bad for a first time attempt to give some boogie back to the community. The first ever Firebird Dance Clinic took place at Vermillion High School on Saturday and ended up with nearly twice the number of hoped for attendees according to Coach Joni Freidel. The clinic, hosted by the Vermillion High School Dance Team – The Inferno – ended up with nearly three dozen kids from fourth grade all the way to kindergarten went well according to Freidel. The clinic was offered to kids up to eighth-grade. “We have 35 dancers here,” Freidel said. “Not only is it a fundraiser but it is a community service. We want to promote the dance programs in Vermillion and also support these little

kids as they decide if it’s something they want to do when they get into high school. “It’s great because they are all so excited about meeting the high school girls and the high school girls have been great adopting them.” Using the clinic as a fundraiser, the Inferno worked with their young charges in preparation of their dance in front of the fans of Tuesday night’s Vermillion High School basketball doubleheader at home against West Central. The young dancers performed at halftime of both the Tanager boys’ and girls’ games in front of some nice-sized crowds. The Inferno members helped choreograph the dance and planned and promoted the clinic. The preparation – which began Saturday and continued Monday and earlier Tuesday – was the

enjoyable part for the clinic attendees and the Inferno members who took on the roles of instructors enjoyed the experience as well. “I love it, I think they are adorable and they try their hardest even if they don’t know what’s going on half the time,” high school junior Kylee Retzlaff said. “It’s fun for them to learn and meet new people.” Retzlaff says that dancers at this age tend to be just like any other younger kid who is there to just be a part of the social dynamic where it is more about being part of a group rather than standing out. “They don’t think it’s as big of a competition to see who has to be on the front row or who is the best dancer,” Retzlaff said. “They are all about having fun, doing the moves, and being with their friends instead of who is the best. “Some girls are bolder

about dancing and less shy about it. Those girls tend to stand out more, but they look up to the older girls in general.” Third-grader Taeli got involved since she has been dancing for a while now and one of her family members is an Inferno senior. “Well my cousin (Teddi Settles) dances (for the Inferno) and it’s fun to do,” Taeli said of her reasons for dancing. “I have been doing it four or five years.” Taeli appreciates the older girls’ patience and kindness. “They are really good,” Taeli said. “They have been dancing a lot longer than we have and they are really nice. They have told us a lot of good things.” Second-grader, Sarah, likes to dance because it keeps her in shape. “It’s fun and I have to stay active,” Sarah said. “I

like to do it for fun and I like to be with my friends. I want to be good at it too.” Sarah admits that building new relationships with kids outside of school is much different than doing so inside the walls of academia. “You have to learn their name right and at school you just say ‘what’s your name?’” Sarah said. “You have to work together. You are always with your friends and always helping.” Both girls were prepared to dance in front of the big, basketball crowd. “It’s kind of embarrassing because you have people waving at you, yelling your name, but you are also happy because they are there to watch you and are watching you,” Taeli said. “I just go through in my mind what the dance is and picture

the dance.” “I have been in ballet a lot and I have done a lot of other dances,” Sarah said. “You have to focus on your dancing, look who’s out there, and think about the dancing.” Proceeds from the clinic go toward camp expenses and uniform costs for the Inferno next year. Freidel would have liked to have seen more older kids show up, but she wasn’t displeased one bit with the clinic turnout. “We weren’t sure what to expect since this was the first time we’ve done this with the high school,” Freidel said. “With popularity we might add one next fall during football and then do one in the winter with basketball. “It’s a great turnout. We were hoping for 20 and we got 35 so...” *Last names weren’t used for privacy reasons.



AFTER: The young Firebird clinic dancers show their stuff on Tuesday night during the Vermillion Tanagers’ basketball doubleheader (left) and when it was all said and done the students and coaches got together to place a moment of time in memories created (right).

THOMAS HATZENBUHLER / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

WWII Vet to Celebrate 100th Birthday Friday

By Susan Odson
From the Leader-Courier

Nearly 60 years after leaving the military, Verne Hendriks still has trouble sleeping at night. He doesn’t like to remember what he had to do during World War II. He doesn’t like to talk about it, either. “My past is past and the rest is history,” he likes to say. But Hendriks also knows that as he nears 100 years old, there aren’t many around who remember first hand how awful that war was. That’s why he has agreed, albeit reluctantly, to attend a party to celebrate his birthday on Friday at Elk Point United Parish from 2-4pm. A highlight of the party will be a collage being assembled of Hendriks’ two Purple Hearts and his Bronze Star, along with other awards he earned in 10 years serving his country. He served in both the Army and the Military Police. In keeping with his desire to keep the past in the past, Hendriks talked briefly about one of his Purple Hearts, the one he got the night he hit a landmine. He

briefly mentioned remembering the smell of blood and diesel fuel from the tanks. Then he moved on to his discharge. Hendriks left the Army when he found out his father was dying of cancer. He went home to help his mother and his grandmother with the family farm, four miles north of Vermillion. He farmed for a few years, but he and his mother didn’t want to become a big farm. She felt farms were becoming too big, too corporate, so they sold the farm. Hendriks then became a campus policeman at the University of South Dakota. He doesn’t have any good stories to tell about the students of that time, though. Unfortunately, poor health forced him to retire after 12 years and he hasn’t really been able to work since then. While Hendriks doesn’t like to talk about the war, he fondly remembers the training he and his company took part in. He said his prowess with weapons led to

his promotion to Private First Class. “Just for being good with a rifle,” he said. He still remembers the training positions – prone, kneeling and standing – and he was good at all of them. Hendriks ended up as a platoon leader. Hendriks doesn’t regret coming home to help his family out. He said the military back in 1955 was changing. A lot of new, young men were being called up and didn’t have the same dedication to the military that Hendriks’ generation had. He didn’t feel that he fit in with the new recruits, so taking to the farm was a good option. These days, Verne is content to spend his days at the VA house Rose Lenz runs in Elk Point. When the weather warms, he’ll take to his modified lawn mower that’s had the deck removed. He uses it for transportation around town. When you meet him, though, don’t ask him about his military service. That’s all past.



HENDRIKS

CRACKER BARRELS BEGIN SATURDAY

The public will have an opportunity to question District 17 legislators at the Legislative Cracker Barrels hosted by the Vermillion Area Chamber & Development Company (VCDC) Legislative Affairs Committee. The first Cracker Barrel will get under way at 10 a.m. Saturday at Vermillion City Hall Council Chambers, 25 Center Street. The public is encouraged to attend the open forums with District 17 Legislators,

Senator Art Rusch and House Representatives Nancy Rasmussen and Ray Ring, to discuss issues happening during the 90th legislative session and bills that may affect them. The second Cracker Barrel will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 28, at Vermillion City Hall Council Chambers. Refreshments will be served. Sponsored by the VFW Auxiliary, Clay County Democrats, Clay County Republicans and the VCDC Legislative Affairs Committee.

SPORTS LEGENDS

of Vermillion

COMING SOON TO THE PLAIN TALK

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