

# Diverse 'family' of actors prepares to present classic musical, 'My Fair Lady,' this weekend

By Parker Knox

When David Burrow was a sixth grader performing in "Tom Sawyer," he accidentally dropped a paintbrush into a bucket of whitewash, splashing fake white paint all over the stage.

"It got a huge laugh. The next performance, I dropped the paintbrush deliberately. At that point I discovered I liked being a ham on stage," said Burrow, a USD history professor who this weekend is trading in his last summer's role as a farmer in "Oklahoma!" to that of Alfred P. Doolittle, a member of what his character calls London's "undeserving poor," in Vermillion Community Theatre's "My Fair Lady."

"Although I'm generally a shy person who doesn't always know what to say during normal conversations, for some reason playing the fool on stage doesn't bother me," Burrow admits. "To paraphrase my character in 'My Fair Lady,' I like it, and I plan to go on liking it."

An unlikely company of university, high school and community actors, musicians and crew will present the Lerner and Loewe classic at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Monday and 2:30 p.m. Sunday at the high school performing arts center.

Cindy Aden says she was bitten by the performance bug at a young age. Last summer's "Oklahoma!" looked to be so much fun that she wanted to join the party. Now she not only is a member of the chorus but has been assigned some speaking and acting in "My Fair Lady."

"I'm stretching myself and my capabilities, and that's lots of fun but terribly frightening," said Aden, who works at the Clay County veterans service office. "There's nothing quite like the fear and excitement of going onstage to put forth my best effort and see how the audience responds. Right now there's a lot of fear going on!"

Another USD faculty member, Solveig Korte, figured being part of one of her all-time favorite shows was too good an opportunity to pass up. "It is a challenge learning the music, the dancing and the movements but a good challenge," Korte

said. "I don't need to go to any gym to work out - the dancing gets my heart rate up, and trying to remember everything keeps my brain engaged!"

Centerville High alumnus Caleb Olson, soon to be a USD theater major, sings, dances and acts in his first VCT show. "It's a good habit to always keep busy, especially so when what I am doing is related to what I hope to be doing as a career," he said. "With every show there is always something to learn and grow from."

The sense of family that somehow always develops despite the diversity of the cast keeps Sue Kappenman coming back. "For me it's a question of remembering which character I'm playing at the moment and then what kind of behavior or attitude that character would have," she said. "But one of the wonderful things about community theater is that each of us has something to contribute to the overall production, and we all help each other along the way to accomplish the end product."

From a raucous dance number outside an English pub to a very proper embassy ball, the production numbers in "My Fair Lady" stretch a novice dancer's skills from one scene to the next. "The way I remember the differences between the dance numbers," said Abraham Painter, recent USD graduate, "is their context within the storyline. I can't say I'm very good at this, as evidenced by my footwork in practices, until close to production week."

Since Painter plays Harry, a faithful customer at one of those London pubs, "with a little bit of luck, being sloppy really fits right in!" he said.

Another chorus member involved in all of the show's dance sequences, USD graduate student Danielle Dornbusch, has a rehearsal routine of her own at home. "First I read through my staging notes, then I go through the motions, and finally find the music on YouTube and bust a move!" she said. "It gets pretty intense sometimes, but I love challenging myself to learn the movements and put everything together."

Dornbusch considers the effort worth it. "The show has become part of me, and

it will be hard knowing I have to wait a whole year before the opportunity rolls around again," she said.

Stephanie Maddox, cast in the leading role of Eliza Doolittle, considers it fortunate to have taken a dialect class at USD in which they studied in depth both Cockney and RP ("received pronunciation," or the Queen's English) dialects. "Having that class under my belt made me far less nervous about performing a show in both of those dialects," said Maddox, whose character transforms before our eyes from a flower seller on the street to a lady of class.

Both in and out of the theater, Maddox has been deliberately speaking for the past six weeks with an accent. "I have always spoken in a British accent randomly, even before we started this show," she explained. "Now it is much more frequent, especially when I am hanging out with other cast members. Each of them gives me another set of ears in a situation where there is no pressure, so they can let me know how I'm sounding."

The scene in which Eliza sings "I Could Have Danced All Night" also features Kelsey Johannsen as Mrs. Pearce, the housekeeper who comes to nurture and care for Eliza during her stay at Prof. Henry Higgins' home. "It is really an honor to be a part of that scene," Johannsen said. "From the sleek and fast scene changes to listening to everyone's talented voices, it gives me goose bumps almost every night."

USD professor David Hulac considers his role as Henry Higgins to be the most ambitious he has ever attempted. "The challenges abound," Hulac said. "The accent and the line memorization are obvious, but it's trying to get into Henry's head that is the most challenging. He's a very complex figure, not quite as cartoony as he might first appear."

Hulac said he and Higgins are alike in that they are both idealists and dreamers who like talking about ideas. "But one important difference between us is that Henry has no regard for the people he steps on to accomplish his ends," he added.

From his wife Mary and their three



Kevin Earlywine, director of the upcoming Vermillion Community Theatre production of "My Fair Lady," shares some acting tips with one of the musical's youngest cast members, Jack Fuller, during a recent rehearsal. The Lerner and Loewe classic at will be presented at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Monday and 2:30 p.m. Sunday at the Vermillion High School Performing Arts Center.

(Photo by David Lias)

children to directors, choristers and volunteers, Hulac realizes the success of such a mammoth production relies on the contributions of so many.

Burrow concurs, adding, "There's something profoundly enjoyable about getting together with people and doing a show. It is focused energy - a nice sprint rather than the marathon that is my regular work life. There's also something about the camaraderie of a show where everyone is there because he wants to be. That's a great contrast to ordinary life where one does things

because he has to or is obligated to."

"After the show is over," Aden said,

"I'll have the friends I've made here, stories to share as well as the rest of the summer to catch up on my sleep!"

"There's a collective spirit to community theater that I don't really get to experience otherwise," Burrow said. Tickets are available at Davis Pharmacy and at Nook 'n' Cranny as well as the door. Tickets go on sale earlier, but the theater doors open 30 minutes before curtain time.

## SESQUICENTENNIAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Cleo Erickson

From the files of the Plain Talk

1956

The new Cavalier Drive-In Café, which has been built by Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Larson on Highway 50, will open this week.

One year Certificates of Deposit have a guaranteed interest rate of 2 1/2 percent at The National Bank of South Dakota. Savings accounts earn 2 percent interest.

Clifford's Market, "The Friendly Little Grocery Store" is open from 7:45 am to 10 pm for all of your food needs.

The City Council has approved one new full time man to be added to the police force. This addition makes it possible to have two men on duty throughout the night hours. Arnold Nelson was appointed by Mayor Patterson and began his duties on July 3rd. His salary was set at \$250.00 a month. Adjusted salaries were approved for Chief P. F. Purcell at \$325.00 per month; David Siljeborg, \$265.00 per month, E. W. McDonald \$255.00 per month.

A local resident visited in New York City recently and brought home a menu from the Promenade Café in Rockefeller Center. Here is an example of what a meal can cost at such a place. Filet Mignon, \$5.50 (for meat alone); mashed potatoes, 45 cents; vegetable, 45 cents, (spinach); bread and butter, 15 cents per slice; salad, 65 cents to \$3.25, (lettuce, Lobster); lemon meringue pie,

50 cents; 1 cup coffee, 40 cents. Total bill with lettuce salad, \$7.65; with asparagus and lobster salad, \$11.05.

Two Vermillion men left by boat on Sunday morning for a vacation trip to New Orleans. Junior Iverson and Tom Chaney are traveling in a 16 foot aluminum run about boat with a 30 horse power motor. They are carrying their own food, fuel, and cameras with them. The boat has a convertible top in case of bad weather. They figure the trip will take them about ten days. That means they will have to average about 230 miles a day over the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. The first mishap occurred only minutes after they departed Sioux City when the boat hit a sandbar. The boat was freed and the trip resumed. Family and friends are planning to drive to New Orleans with a boat trailer to meet the adventurers on the completion of their trip.

The County assessed valuation is up \$2,909,164.00 over last year. This includes both real estate and personal property.

The National Bank of South Dakota building on the corner of Main and Court Streets will add an addition of 52 X 22 feet to the rear of the building. The addition will be of concrete block, will be air conditioned and will add about 1200 feet of additional space. It will house the banks bookkeeping department.

Clay County has been declared a "Drought area" according to an announcement from Washington.

Information has been received from the state ASC office to the affect that all corn on land which has been placed in acreage reserve must be destroyed by August 3. It must be disked at least once or mowed or some other means so that no corn will be reproduced. The announcement added that corn acreage which is destroyed may be grazed until August 31, but may not be cut to be fed.

The dollar tax levy to meet the budgeted operating costs of the Vermillion schools was set at \$8,000.00 less than the figure for last year. The dollar levy to be raised through taxes is \$183,000.00 compared with a levy of \$191,000.00 for the last year. For the 1956-57 school year the Board of Education approved a total operating budget of \$259,829.00 on the basis of figures and estimates prepared by Supt. H. O. Vanden Berge.

The enrollment at USD may hit nearly 2000 this year.

Between 1855 and 1881 no less than 19 steamboats on the Missouri in South Dakota were wrecked, burned, destroyed by ice or a falling bank.

The average assessed value per acre of agricultural land in Clay County is \$97.23 per acre. Last year, in 1955, the valuation was \$55.43 per acre. This

places Clay County the second highest among all counties in the state. Union County is the highest with a value of \$103.78 per acre.

Mary Pickford, famous screen star of the motion picture industry will speak in Vermillion tonight. She is on a nation tour in behalf of the candidacy of President Eisenhower. The Pickford party will arrive about 5:30 by plane and will be dinner guests at the Evergreen Restaurant at 7:30 pm. Miss Pickford will speak at the Co-Ed Theatre at 9:30 pm. The public is invited.

The March Theatre building, a familiar landmark on Main Street for some 50 years, will be torn down. The building was first built as the city hall, and later housed the City Theatre. In 1927, J. F. March became the owner and it became the home of the March Theatre. The ground was the first site of Vermillion's first City Hall following the flood of 1881.

The city manager form of municipal government was the discussion topic at the meeting of the citizen advisory committee on city government.

If any of you women haven't tried the stuffed frozen turkeys that were new here on the market this year, they are

highly recommended. They are so delicious and easy to fix that they are worth the extra ten cents a pound that one has to pay for it. The directions come with it and all one has to do is take off the plastic bag, brush it with butter, stick it frozen in a hot oven and brown for an hour or so, then cover and bake in a slow oven until tender. A husband can even do it and probably will be real proud of the beautiful turkey he brings to the table.

The first reports of unidentified objects being sighted by Vermillion residents was reported to the Plain Talk this week. Someone reported seeing moving white spots that changed to a bright red, travelling from west to east. A police officer who parked his car on the bluff reported seeing some peculiar red and green lights in the sky. Yankton police reported seeing the same things.

Ten senior USD students from Vermillion have been serving during

the past several weeks as practice teachers at VHS. Barbara Seiler is teaching pupils in the 5th grade at Austin School; Charlotte Olson works with the 2nd grade at Austin School; Robert Mead, a grad student in Zoology is teaching General Science in Jr. High School. Carol Reedy, a math major is teaching 9th grade Algebra; Bob Yeado, is teaching a high school class in History. Mary Ekman is teaching a sophomore English class; Arlis Sorenson, a home economics major, is teaching a ninth grade Home Economics class; Ruth Fairbanks is teaching a sophomore typing class and Nancy Hoy is practicing teaching an English Class and Nancy England teaches a 9th grade class in Home Economics.

END 1956

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