

One in a Ver Million Meet Briseis Schnack

By David Lias
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Nearly every evening for weeks now, the stage of the Vermillion Performing Arts Center at Vermillion High School has been filled with young girls from the community – and a few adults, too.

The girls are all playing street-wise orphans; the adults play characters with familiar names – from Oliver “Daddy” Warbucks to Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Local kids and adults have been working diligently for over a month now, mastering their lines and the tunes for upcoming performance of the Broadway musical “Annie.”

It is a production where the youth take on an identity of their own, serving as more than simply supporting characters. Young girls, in fact, outnumber the adult cast members.

This summer’s Vermillion Community Theatre production of “Annie” will be held Friday, July 20, Saturday, July 21 and Monday, July 23 at 7 p.m. along with a matinee on Sunday, July 22 at 2:30 p.m. All performances will be at the Vermillion High School Performing Arts Center.

Playing the lead role as the red-haired orphan,

Annie, is Briseis Schnack, 11-year-old daughter of Sue and Dallas Schnack of Vermillion.

Briseis is no stranger to Vermillion Community Theatre productions, but this summer marks her first major role.

“I have been “In Every Generation,” which was presented three years ago, and I was in last summer’s “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory,” Briseis said.

There was no question in her mind, upon hearing that the VCT was planning to present “Annie” as this summer’s production, that she would be a part of it. And, she decided right away at taking at shot at auditioning to play the part of the red-haired orphan.

“Yes, I was very interested in being Annie,” she said. Before rehearsals began ... “I was busy at home practicing my songs, and I was working on it already.

“I’ve seen the movie plenty of times, and my mom has gone to the musical, so she told me about it,” Briseis said.

She enjoys the fact that she is one of approximately 40 youth involved in this summer’s musical. Briseis also appreciates having the chance to work with grown-ups from her home community.

A plus is many of those adults have years of

experience being involved with Vermillion Community Theatre.

“I think with adults, the experience of being in a play is you work harder,” Briseis said. “With kids, it’s a lot of work, but you also have fun and you’re able to talk and everything.

“There is a difference being in a play with adults than in being in one with just kids. With adults, you want to be able to learn more, because they’re older than you and they know about things better that they can teach you. When you’re together with a lot of kids, you’re all learning it together, so it’s not hard,” she said.

Rehearsals began in early June, under the direction of Jen Dickenson. It has been a busy summer for all of the youth involved in the musical, and in the last month or so, Briseis has learned that, despite all of the hard work, performing can be very enjoyable.

“I think my favorite part of all of this is just having fun,” she said. “Having fun up on stage and being able to do everything ... and lots of hugging and talking with each other. It feels like you’re just in the experience, and I feel like I am Annie when I’m up there (on stage).”

She especially enjoys being able to perform with many people, both kids and adults, with



whom she is already acquainted. As she gets to know them a bit better with each passing week, they, in turn, serve as a support system.

“I actually knew a lot of the people that are in the musical before this, so when I knew that most of those people were the lead roles, I was already

worked up,” Briseis said. “I already knew them, and I didn’t have to get to know them to be able to do this.”

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Assistance available to landowners along Mo. River

Assistance is available for eligible landowners who lost crops as a result of the 2011 Missouri River flood. This 1,000-year flood event submerged more than 450,000 acres of crop ground in five states on either side of the river from Ft. Randall Dam to St. Louis, MO, including South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri. The most

significant damage was caused by deposits of sand on cropland and grazing land.

As much as \$185,000 in the way of natural disaster recovery funds have been designated to assist property owners of agricultural land in Bon Homme, Charles Mix, Clay, Gregory, Yankton and Union County, to reclaim land damaged by the flood. Cover crops will be

the major conservation practice applied in this region on both cropland and grazing land to bring these flood-damaged areas back into production. But other conservation practices may need to be installed to aid in the recovery effort.

Producers interested in signing up for these natural disaster recovery funds need to do so immediately. To do so contact the USDA NRCS office serving Clay and Union County immediately at (605) 624-7060 and (605) 356-3308, Ext. 3, respectively.

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