



# The Zoo Man And Friends Visit Summer Reading Program

BY SARAH WETZEL  
For the Plain Talk

Throughout the Vermillion Public Library's Summer Reading Program, kids have been encouraged to read not only for fun but also to learn about the world around them.

Part of their encouragement came from weekly entertainers such as Brent Mielke, aka the Zoo Man who visited the library Monday with a few of his animal friends.

"I'm not going to tell you all I know about my animal friends," he told the gathered crowd of children. "I want you to check out books and learn more for yourself."

The special guests certainly sparked some interest.

"Those two lizards were so cool and those two snakes were so cool," said a very enthusiastic Hope.

Hope carried her animal enthusiasm to the library play area after the show.

"Someone can ride these dinosaurs but not the baby one because it's not strong," she said. "I like baby dinosaurs they're nice but not the big dinosaurs. These are nice because they have a smile."

The kids even had a chance to get up close and personal with the animals which consisted of a Bearded Dragon from Australia, a Royal Python named Razor, a Giant Blue-Tongued Skink and a Golden Albino Python named Big Guy #15.

"I touched the little one and the big one," said Cheyenne, 3, proudly.

Jack, 5, also got to touch the animals.

"I liked feeling the snake," he said. "It felt like slime."

Though the kids would describe the feeling of the snakes and lizards as slime, Mielke told the kids it's no different than touching your own fingernails because the scales are made of the same material.

"Feels just like your mom's legs," he joked as he brought the Bearded



SARAH WETZEL/FOR THE PLAIN TALK  
**The Zoo Man and his cold-blooded friends said hello to a crowd of kids at the Vermillion public library Monday. Kids even got a chance to pet the scaly guests.**

Dragon around for the children to feel its tail.

Keeping with the Superhero theme of the summer reading program, the Zoo Man described the "super powers" of his friends.

The Blue-Tongued Skink, for example, scares predators away by flashing its blue tongue and can detach from its tail to distract a predator using its two brains.

"He licked me on the nose," said Nessa, 5, who got a kiss from the lizard. "It feels like it was a sponge-rubbery."

And ho would Nessa feel if she had two brains like the Skink?

"I'd just go crazy," she said.

As for superpowers if Nessa knew what she would choose.

"It would be the ability to be invisible," she said. "I would fight people and take them to jail."

One of the highlights of the show was seeing the five-month old python

who had already grown to over five feet long.

According to Mielke, the snake still has quite a bit of growing to do. His mother is 42 feet long and weighs 650 pounds.

It took five volunteers lined up to hold the length of Big Guy #15.

"I got to hold that snake, the big yellow one," Nessa said. "It feels like snake slime!"

Though most enjoyed the show, they wouldn't want those type of friends as pets.

"I would be scared sometimes," said Keaton, 4. "I'd like to have pets that don't really live in the wild like dogs and stuff. I just love all kinds of animals like kitties and horses. We have an out cat but it sometimes goes away."

For more information on library events visit [vermillionpubliclibrary.org](http://vermillionpubliclibrary.org).

## 'Brown Family History' To Be Presented

Saturday, August 1st the Clay County Historical Society will be the recipient of the fruits of many years of research by a Sioux City woman. Mrs. Jeanine Ashmore of Sioux City will present to the Society the culmination of her accumulated Brown Family History. The manuscript includes biographical information and pictures of historic, as well as contemporary descendants of Patrick Thomas Brown, who was born in 1784, Donegal, Ireland. Descendant information includes local and area residents, as well as those residing across the nation. Ashmore's husband, Keith, is a descendant of the William Brown family, a son of Patrick.

Patrick Thomas Brown and his family left Ireland and immigrated to Canada in 1839. Many of Patrick's children then migrated to Clay County, South Dakota beginning in about 1874.

In those early days in Clay County there were no bridges spanning the Missouri River at Vermillion; only ferry boats were used to transport people and goods across the river. Many of Patrick's sons and grandsons were involved in the ferryboat business, owning boats, including the steam powered 'Cora Ryan' which is pictured in the book.

Another power boat of the time pictured in the book, the 'Dolla B', was the subject of an oil painting by California artist Ron Bacher entitled "Crossin' Big Mo". It depicts cattle being loaded to the Dolla B for transport across the river. The painting was later featured in a local newspaper article which Ashmore discovered; this caused her to inquire as to the current whereabouts of the painting. The painting was located and will be on display at the Historical Society's Austin - Whittemore House on August 1st, during the presentation festivities. A [private] reception for contributing members of the Brown families will be hosted by Mr. & Mrs. Ashmore.

The public is invited to view a copy of The Brown Family History during regular hours of the Historical Society's Austin-Whittemore House, 15 Austin Street, Vermillion, South Dakota.

## Community Blood Drive Scheduled

Community Blood Bank and Sanford Vermillion will host an All American blood drive on Wednesday, July 29 from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. Both bloodmobiles will be there taking blood donations to help improve the summer blood supply for the area. All who donate will receive a commemorative ALL AMERICAN BLOOD DONOR t-shirt and a free lunch.

"We are extremely grateful for the support given by the community to help improve the supply of blood within the area. It is important to know that the blood that is donated to Community Blood Bank is from your friends and neighbors in this region," states Ken Versteeg, Executive Director, Community Blood Bank. "The summer becomes a very challenging time of year to maintain an adequate blood supply. We encourage the community to help us by donating on the bloodmobile when it visits Vermillion."

For more information or to make an appointment please call 624-2611. Walk-ins are also welcome. Donors must be at least 17 years of age (16 years old with signed parent consent), be in good general health and weigh at least 110 pounds. It is recommended that a person eat and drink plenty of fluid prior to donating. Donating blood on the Community Blood Bank bloodmobile takes just 30-35 minutes.

Community Blood Bank is a joint cooperative of Sanford Medical Center and Avera McKennan Hospital, servicing 32 local hospitals. Community Blood Bank is not affiliated with any other blood bank organization and is proud to be a self-sufficient organization, thanks to the generosity of our local donors.

## Huber Scholarship Blood Drive Set

Please help Mackenzie and Josie reach their goal of 50 units of blood donated to receive a college scholarship! They are hosting a blood drive on Tuesday, 7/28/15 from 12:30pm-6pm at Ace Hardware in Vermillion. They would like to invite the community to come out and not only help local hospitals with the summer blood supply, but also help their reach the goal of 50 units, to be awarded a college scholarship!! All registered donors for their blood drive will receive a Chlotique discount and a pass to the wellness center. Please call Mackenzie at 605-677-9050 to schedule your appointment.

## End Of Summer Reading Program Party Planned For Edith Siegrist Library

The Edith B. Siegrist Vermillion Public Library will be hosting a closing party for its Summer Reading Program at 1 p.m. on Monday, July 27. Patrons are invited to join in this Backyard Bash for an afternoon of games, pizza and prizes in honor of their participation in this summer's program. Those who wish to attend are encouraged to reserve a spot in advance by either calling the library or visiting the Circulation Desk.

Entitled "Every Hero Has a Story," the 2015 Summer Reading Program started on June 1 and has been an action-packed ride every day since. Group activities, LEGO robotics and various notable entertainers have been a valuable part of the experience; even more valuable, however, are the participants. Active involvement has come from all ages, preschoolers to adults, and the program would not have been possible without them. The library staff is grateful to have hosted this program for the community and is taking this opportunity to thank all those involved.

For more information, stop in or call 670-7060.

# Venkatachalam Sets High Standards For Beacom School Of Business

BY JAMES COOPER  
For The Plain Talk

The Beacom School of Business has long upheld the gold standard for business education and practice in the state of South Dakota, as well as nationwide. Since 1949, Beacom has enjoyed full accreditation by The



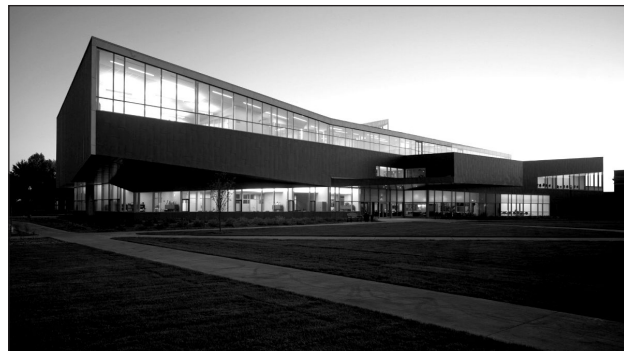
Venkatachalam

Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSB International). Along with its campus curriculum,

Beacom also provides world class online education

A New Hampshire transplant, Dr. Venky Venkatachalam was at the University of New Hampshire for twenty-three years. When he came to South Dakota, people always ask him "why?" to which he replies, "The state of South Dakota has got very solid economic fundamentals. It always gets ranked very high, always in the top 10 for business friendly state, most entrepreneur friendly state." These criteria make Dr. Venkatachalam optimistic to live and work in South Dakota.

As Dean, Dr. Venkatachalam holds tightly to his per-



COURTESY PHOTO

**The online Master of Professional Accountancy (MPA) degree offered by the University of South Dakota's Beacom School of Business is ranked best nationally by OnlineU because of its affordability and the high proportion of graduates who pass the CPA exam.**

sonal philosophy of what a business school should be. "We've got to be an engine for economic development. It's not enough to graduate top-notch students each year, then to see them getting attractive jobs in the economy, in industry, with a high starting salary...it's good to do that, but for me, starting out, what is sufficient is to make an impact in the state through job creation..." This philosophy might not seem to some as what a typical 'go-getter' might shoot for, but in terms of sustainable, sound economic growth, the up and coming generations have to look toward ensuring the prosperity in the whole nation, not just the

pronounced hubs.

Serving as Dean for only eleven months, Dr. Venkatachalam has done his research on the Beacom School of Business as an outsider and as an insider. He says that, "USD is a flagship...and the Beacom School of Business has a solid reputation. I'm so proud of the faculty, staff, and the students. Faculty are absolutely dedicated and passionate for student success." Leadership can only work if the leader is invested in the project, so it is very comforting to know just how deeply invested Dr. Venkatachalam and the Beacom Faculty are to the future of USD and South Dakota. Dr. Venkatachalam

also admits to taking all of the energies in Beacom and "focusing" them into one message that is the most powerful as Beacom heads into the future.

Under Dr. Venkatachalam, the business school has seen the development of the Entrepreneur Mentorship Program, in which real word entrepreneurs offer to teach students from all over the university about how to "take their ideas to the marketplace". Also, they had the first I-to-I (Invent to Innovate) Competition, which took place at the high school, undergraduate, and graduate levels. In the competition, participants presented entrepreneurial ideas and how they would take them to the marketplace.

Finally, OnlineU ranked USD number one in the nation for online Accounting education.

Dr. Venkatachalam attributes this success to the faculty and staff, but some of the credit lies in great leadership. He mentioned that he works from a four step mantra, "You gotta think big, build small, you have to fail quick, then scale it fast." By whatever mantra he employs, clearly, Dr. Venkatachalam and the Beacom School of Business are doing their part as USD looks toward the future with optimism and open eyes.

## Beacom Online Graduate Accounting Degree Ranked Best In U.S.

The online Master of Professional Accountancy (MPA) degree offered by the University of South Dakota's Beacom School of Business is ranked best nationally by OnlineU because of its affordability and the high proportion of graduates who pass the CPA exam.

OnlineU, a directory that ranks U.S. online colleges, put Beacom's MPA degree at No. 1 on its 2015 Top Online Accounting Degrees, which only includes schools that have a Certified Public Accountant exam pass rate of 50 percent or higher and are accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB-International). "With its exceptionally high CPA pass rate of 86.96

percent, the University of South Dakota is a great place to earn an online accounting degree. USD's accounting programs are affordable, at less than \$7,000 for tuition," OnlineU wrote in its summary of USD's program: <http://bit.ly/1HhWHR9>.

Kathryn Birkeland, MPA coordinator, said that while the Master of Professional Accountancy program has been online for a few years, the on-campus program has been offered since 1975. Online students take courses with the same top-tier faculty that has mentored successful graduates for decades. The online courses include a high-level of interaction with faculty and classmates.

The online program requires 30 credits of graduate work and can be completed in as little as two calendar years depending on a student's background coursework. Each student has a dedicated academic advisor to create a customized timeline for comple-

tion. The program can be used to meet the 150 credit hour and coursework requirements for students to be eligible to sit for CPA exam in most jurisdictions.

Details of USD's MPA degree: <http://yote.us/1JYUHHt>.

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