

Turning The Spotlight On ‘Mary Poppins’ Costumer Cinda Passick

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

To an audience member watching a live theatrical performance, little thought is given to the cast members not seen on stage.

Though Cinda Passick will not be singing, dancing or acting in this summer’s Vermillion Community Theatre (VCT) production of ‘Mary Poppins’ (tickets to go on sale Aug. 7) her work on the show will definitely be seen in the costume of every cast member.

“I like the fact that it’s not a job,” she said. “It has a beginning and an end. It takes a lot of time and work. When the play is on I’ve got the kitchen table covered, the dining table covered and a lot of stuff in the living room, as well. It just kind of takes over, because I have to lay it out and see it.”

‘Mary Poppins’ is Passick’s fifth show heading the costume department.

According to Passick, she got rather an accidental start in the costume business after the mother of one of her second grade students approached her about helping out with costumes for VCT.

“I always liked to do plays with my kids,” Passick said. “I always invited the parents to come and see the play. I mentioned it to Misha that I had helped with one of the VCT plays as the costumer. That year, I was out in Rapid City and she called and asked if I would be interested in doing some costuming. I thought I was going to be sewing, and it turned out that I ended up (costuming) ‘Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory.’ I didn’t know I was heading up the costumes. That’s how I got sort of inducted. They asked me to come back the next year.”

So far Passick has done the costumes for the VCT productions of ‘Willy Wonka’, ‘Robin Hood’, ‘Annie’, ‘Oliver’ and now, ‘Mary Poppins.’

Passick’s experience in creating costumes proves that it doesn’t take formal instruction to do what you love.

“I started sewing when I was probably 12 and I’m self-taught,” she said. “I’ve not ever taken any lessons or classes. I read patterns very well and I’ve done a lot of sewing. I want to make something and I figure it out.”

Passick used her sewing talents to make clothing for her children, especially for Christmas and Easter.

“I’ve always loved fancy frilly things, which really kind of plays into what we do in the theater,” she said. “I’ve always liked crafts and being



SARAH WETZEL/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Cinda Passick is costuming her fifth show for the Vermillion Community Theatre making sure the cast of Mary Poppins looks practically perfect in every way.

imaginative and that’s really come in handy. Especially when we did ‘Annie’, the little girls needed smocks. So, I would take a man’s shirt – this is where Civic Council was really nice – and I would make a smock for the girls. No two were the same. It all depended on the shirt and what I could see in it and change it up.

“I’ve been able to combine and use ideas that I’ve learned from something in the past to create something in the present,” she said. “A lot of it just comes through experience.”

Experience or not ‘Mary Poppins’ has presented some challenges, according to Passick.

“What I did was I went online and looked at what other shows have done,” she said, speaking of the first thing she does when costuming a show. “The thing is, ‘Mary Poppins’ is a recent release to be put on as a play. If you watch ‘Saving Mr. Banks’ you know that even P.L. Travers wouldn’t release the story to Walt Disney without a big to-do. Finally, it was (made) available to be performed (in community theatres) as of October. So, right at first, there were not a lot of pictures out there other than the Walt Disney thing. There weren’t a lot of other productions that people had done so you could even get some ideas. But I put together a slideshow with what was available.”

The slideshow was then shared

with the director of the show, Callie Hisek, for input and approval.

“Then we started looking around at patterns and fabrics to see what was going to work for the show,” Passick said.

Passick said a lot of help costuming comes from Sandy Dickenson, VCT board member.

“She’s been in theater and dealing with plays a lot longer than I have and so she really knows period costuming, what it should look like and what they wore in that era,” Passick said.

VCT also collaborates with the USD costume shop where they rent some of the costumes.

“It’s very convenient because they have nice period things, which is very helpful,” Passick said. “We construct our own things, as needed. For certain characters we’ll construct our own things if we can’t find it in their shop. It kind of depends on the show. In some respects we’ve had more things made other years like when we had 40 orphans.”

There’s also VCT’s own stash of costumes to draw from.

“Things that we’ve made, things that we’ve gotten from Civic Council or people have donated, things like that, there’s a shed we rent and keep everything in,” Passick said. “I went there shopping yesterday. We’ve got women’s hats that we’ll pull out and

PASSICK | PAGE 6



COURTESY PHOTO

Dakota Hospital Foundation Grant Awarded To Vermillion Public Schools Foundation

Dakota Hospital Foundation has awarded the Vermillion Public Schools Foundation a \$3,000 grant to partially fund needed improvements of the tennis courts at Vermillion High School.

The grant requested funds to repair and resurface four tennis courts and replace nets at the existing tennis facilities. Additional dollars have also been raised through other sources to achieve the total project cost of \$22,000.

“The Vermillion Public Schools Foundation wants to thank the Dakota Hospital Foundation for its generous support. The VPS Foundation is pleased to assist the tennis supporters and the Vermillion Athletic Boosters in this project that provides a valuable community asset for the east side of town and also benefits the tennis program in the Vermillion Public schools. The tennis courts will be available to people on the east side much like the city courts are available on the west side at Barstow Park,” said Susan Tuve, President of the Vermillion Public Schools Foundation.

“We are excited to help with renovations to the tennis courts that will enhance the tennis program for our youth and for community members who wish to utilize the upgraded facilities,” said Lisa Ketcham, President, Dakota Hospital Foundation Board.



COURTESY PHOTO

Dakota Hospital Foundation Grant Awarded To Edith B. Siegrist Vermillion Public Library Foundation

A grant submitted by the Vermillion Area Robotics Club was approved by Dakota Hospital Foundation. The \$1,500 grant allowed for the purchase of a 3-D printer for use in producing prosthetic devices for the e-NABLE organization.

The grant requested funds to assist the club in areas of growth and service. DHF approved the technology element of the request through funding for the 3-D printer. In working with the Robotics Club, the DHF Innovation Committee expressed an interest in ensuring public access to the technology. This was made possible by awarding the funds through the Edith B. Siegrist Vermillion Public Library Foundation. The printer is housed and maintained at the library providing club members and general public access to this state-of-the-art technology.

“It is great to see DHF and the Edith B. Siegrist Vermillion Public Library come together to make this unique learning opportunity and technology resource possible for our community’s youth. While I feel robotics teaches youth many life skills and challenges youth to design/build really cool robots, I think it is just as important for our youth to see first-hand the potential impact technology can have on people’s lives. I also love the learning concept of online collaboration and open-sourcing between people all over the world (engineers, scientists, etc.) to design a product using new technology all with the same goal in mind...helping people,” said Susan Rolfes, VARC Leader/coach.

“We are very pleased to be able to provide this state of the art equipment for use by the Robotics group and others throughout our community. It’s an excellent opportunity for interactive learning, said Lisa Ketcham, President, Dakota Hospital Foundation Board.

Heritage Ride Returns August 15

The Clay-Union foundation is hosting Heritage ride, a ride at your own pace bike ride, on Saturday, August 15th starting at Imm. Lutheran church in Elk Point, SD. Registration starts at 8 am, riders leave at 9 am. Registration forms are at BIKEIOWA - Your #1 source for Iowa bicycle rides, events and news. under Heritage ride. Or at www.clay-unionfoundation.org under the events tab. Proceeds support the local mentoring program. Volunteers are needed- call John Gille 605-421-5050.

Vermillion High School Doubly Represented In State Honors Choir

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

Despite intense competition Sowmya Ragotherman (soprano) and Sam Person (base) both were awarded positions in the 42nd annual South Dakota All-State High School Honor Choir.

“South Dakota isn’t a hugely populated state but there is still some pretty tough competition,” said Vermillion High School choral director Trisha Fisher. “Especially for the soprano when every girl thinks that they’re a soprano and they like singing high. It’s out of the entire state and they take I think it’s 150 singers out of the entire state and all of the voices are equal. There’s the same number of

sopranos, altos, tenors and bases. It’s a very big honor.”

The concert will take place today (Friday) at 7:30 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center on the South Dakota State University campus in Brookings. Admission is \$10.

“The final concert is formal,” Fisher said. “They have to have a prom dress and everything. It’s a very prestigious event.”

Ragotherman and Person both put in a lot of hard work individually, according to Fisher, to make it into the choir.

“They do most of the preparation on their own,” she said. “If they have questions they come talk to me. I help them prepare for their audition and get that all set up.”

The auditions are no picnic, Fisher said.

“There are a few different components,” she said. “They have a written test. They have to prepare a solo and then there’s a few examples of sight-singing and there’s some tonal memory. Those are all the things they’re judged on. So it depends on how much they get right and the quality of their voice.”

The honor was well deserved according to Fisher.

“They are both very talented singers,” she said. “I don’t know how consistently they have been in the music program throughout their middle school and high school careers. Sowmya is going to be a senior and Sam is going to be a junior.

You can only audition your sophomore and junior year. So incoming seniors and juniors.”

Fisher herself was a two-year Honor Choir member and is currently a member of the South Dakota American Choral Directors Association, which sponsors the Honors Choir event.

According to a press release, the choir this year is directed by Robert A. Harris, professor emeritus at Northwestern University’s Bienen School of Music.

The South Dakota All-State Honor Choir was founded in 1974 by six choral directors and continues to take place each year at one of South Dakota’s universities or colleges.

County Commission Concludes Budget Hearings

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE
shauna.marlette@plaintalk.net

The Clay County Commission held their final 2016 budget hearings on Tuesday in a marathon session that saw them discuss everything from raising the mileage reimbursement rate to discussing a new seed planter for the Clay County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Budget requests were heard from the Beresford Public Library, 911 Communications, County Zoning, the County Auditor, the district states attorney office, Vermillion Solid Waste and Clay County Soil and Water Conservation District.

For the most part all budget requests were in line with the budgets adopted for 2015.

One purchase that was approved during the hearing was for new voting equipment replacing outdated machinery currently owned by the county.

Carri Crum, Clay County Auditor, said the cost for

the new voting equipment was \$31,380; however, she had applied for and previously received a grant from the state in the amount of \$48,000 which would cover all costs.

Teddi Gertsema, State District Attorney for Clay County said her budget request was significantly higher than last year because she was taking the council’s recommendation and hiring an additional lawyer for the office.

Gertsema said that the three on staff are all working very hard to get everything done in the office, but they are stretched as far as they can go. With additional requirements for the office she said if anyone were to become sick or request vacation times, it would be impossible to accomplish all the work that is needed to be done.

The Clay County Soil and Water Conservation District representatives including Teddy Taggart explained that they will need to consider purchasing a new

planter in the next several years. The current planter, which was purchased in 2002, is currently still operational, but starting to show its age.

Commissioner Phyllis Packard suggested that a special fund be set up where any unused funds in the Clay County Soil and Water Conservation District budget at year’s end would be rolled in, specifically designated for future equipment purchases.

Other business that was completed during the meeting included:

- Approving the motion that all service contracts will be signed by the commission rather than individual department heads within the county;

- Hiring Wendy Ohl to create a new website for the county at the cost of \$3,100;
- Adopting the state rate of mileage for the upcoming year retroactive to July 1, 2015;

- Held a ditch board meeting to discuss mailing out letters to all land owners regarding new parceling of ditches.

FOR RENT

4 Bedroom home acreage

for rent August 1st

Beresford Area, 20 minutes

from Vermillion.

Quonset, 2 car garage, many updates.

Call 605-360-9656 or 605-334-1816



Vermillion Area Farmer's Market

Thursdays 3-7pm
Clay County Fairgrounds
Saturday 9am-Noon
Downtown at the Public Plaza

- In Season Produce • Breads • Meats
- Eggs • Cheese • Soaps • Crafts • and More!

Thursday, August 27th
Dog Rally

605-659-3399
VAFarmersMarket@gmail.com
www.vermillionfarmersmarket.org

facebook

