

Sheriff's office searching for missing person

The Clay County Sheriff's Office is investigating a report of a missing person.

A report was received Saturday morning, March 6, of an abandoned vehicle on Highway 19 south of Vermillion at the Missouri River. The vehicle is registered to Barbara Zenk, 52, of Vermillion. Ms. Zenk was formerly a resident of Newcastle, NE.

Attempts to locate Ms. Zenk in the area her vehicle was located have been unsuccessful. As of Monday morning, she has not reported for work at Masterworks in Vermillion or at The University of South Dakota where she is employed as a custodian.

Searches have been conducted along the highway and the banks of the Missouri River in the area where the car was located both on foot and by air. A tracking dog has been brought to the scene. None of the efforts have succeeded in locating Ms. Zenk.

While there is no indication that Ms. Zenk may have jumped or fallen from the bridge or walked out onto the ice, those possibilities cannot be ruled out at this time. The area was mostly ice covered on Saturday morning. The ice was solid under the bridge with no apparent open spots. While the investigation has found that Ms. Zenk has been dealing with depression, there has been no indication that Ms. Zenk is deceased. At this time, this matter is being considered a missing person case.

Ms. Zenk is a white female, 5'3", 130 lbs., with brown hair and green eyes. She was last seen wearing a green coat, dark pants and tennis shoes. Her vehicle is a red, 4-door, 2004 Jeep Liberty. SD license plate 19H N45. It was recovered on the state line, parked on the shoulder of the northbound lane of the Vermillion/Newcastle, NE bridge that crosses the Missouri river.

The vehicle contained Ms. Zenk's purse, cell phone and keys.

Anyone with information regarding Ms. Zenk's whereabouts or her vehicle parked along the Vermillion/Newcastle Bridge on Highway 19 is encouraged to contact the Clay County Sheriff at (605) 677-7100. Do NOT take action to rescue the endangered person. CALL IMMEDIATELY.

More than just a matter of taste

ProStart competition touches on culinary prep, marketing

By David Lias
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A few Vermillion High School students traded textbooks and red Tanager sweatshirts for sharp knives and chef's attire Thursday as they competed in the school's ProStart cooking competition, sponsored by the National Restaurant Association on March 4.

The aroma of fine food being cooked in the high school commons by two teams of student chefs masked the intense pressure the young cooks faced that morning. Each team only had an hour to prepare a three-course meal. They battled time as they painstakingly cooked, stirred, diced, chopped and eventually plated their various dishes.

Adding extra anxiety to the competition were the judges who wandered about, each with a clipboard in hand, watching and taking note of how well each student performed that morning.

Andy Anderson of Hy-Vee, Jim Waters of Jones' Food Store, Shannon Fairholm, a member of the Vermillion School Board, and Mark Kneeskern, executive chef for Aramark on the University of South Dakota campus, served as judges for this year's competition.

A bit of expertise is needed to fairly evaluate the students' performance. The cuisine they were preparing could hardly be labeled as ordinary.

Judges watched as the team of Joe Peterson, Thomas Martin and James Protzman prepared Mediterranean salad with prosciutto, marinated sirloin steak, a toasted bulgur side and sautéed zucchini and red peppers. For dessert, they fixed and served grilled pineapple.

The second team of Molly LeCates, Megan Rerleitner, Nichole Christensen



Sam Robinson and Megan Rerleitner watch as Molly LeCates puts the final touches on their team's dessert offering of lemon and white chocolate mousse with strawberries. (Photo by David Lias)

and Sam Robinson also received plenty of judges' scrutiny as they eventually plated their menu of mixed green salad with parmigiano crisps, Rosemary airline chicken breast with stuffed tortellini and lemon and white chocolate mousse with strawberries.

"ProStart is designed to be a career-based culinary class, and besides doing this culinary competition, students also do a management competition," said the young chefs' instructor, Ilene Ler-

seth, family consumer science teacher at Vermillion High School. "And for the management competition, they actually had to design a restaurant, and they have to do everything from the coming up with business' basic concept, setting hours of operation, and coming up with nine menu items. They must also come up with two marketing schemes, and they put together written materials and

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Welcome Table will meet March 15

The next Vermillion Welcome table will meet Monday, March 15 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the United Methodist Church.

It will be the 435th Welcome Table meal served.

The March 15 meal will be sponsored and served by USD AWOL.

Thank you to The Red Hat Society for sponsoring and serving last Monday's meal.

Presentation on green burials planned

Professor Michael Myers, Elderlaw specialist, University of South Dakota School of Law, presents "Mary Ellen, Green Burials and the Law" at the W.H. Over Museum on Tuesday, March 16 at 7 p.m.

He will give a case study of his wife's burial and the discretion of SDCL 34-26-1 that, "Every person has the right to direct the manner in which his/her body or any part thereof shall be disposed of after his/her death."

Plain Talk poll results

Poll results 3-5-10
Who has the best plan for health care reform?
President Obama 86 votes
The Republicans in Congress 93 votes
Undecided 11 votes
To participate in the Plain Talk Internet poll, log on to www.plaintalk.net.

USD, school board find common ground on DakotaDome

By David Lias
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It appears that the Vermillion School District and the University of South Dakota are close to reaching an agreement that will call for the district to pay a bit more than it has in the past to use the DakotaDome.

In exchange, the school district will receive greater use of the athletic facility.

The latest set of financial figures offered by the university calls for the school district to make a \$35,000 payment for use of the DakotaDome during the first year of the new agreement. In

the second year, the school district would pay an additional \$1,500, or a total of \$36,500, to gain access to the facility.

"And we would pay an additional \$1,000 if the third year is needed," said Vermillion School Board President Mark Bottolfson at the board's regular meeting Monday night.

"This agreement has caused quite a bit of talk over the last three months in the community, to say the least," he said. "I believe it started back in December with a committee of about nine or 10 people together to go over the agreement."

That committee made up of representatives of USD, the school district, and the Vermillion community held five

meetings beginning last November to explore the facility use agreements between schools and universities and colleges in other communities, and the possibility of local entities paying yearly fees or making capital investments in the DakotaDome in exchange for its extended use.

"That's kind of the direction that we're going now," said Bottolfson at Monday's school board meeting. "That (extended use) being maybe playing more games, including ninth grade and JV games at the Dome, and maybe a couple track meets. The specifics of that haven't been drawn up yet. That's still under consideration."

The committee had explored the costs involved in another long-term agreement between the university and the school district. The final figures it initially arrived at compelled the school board to begin thinking about constructing its own outdoor field for the high school football program.

The new plan offered by USD to the district was first introduced to board members for their review by Superintendent Mark Froke approximately 10 days ago. It calls for a two-year, short-term agreement with an option for a third year, and includes expanding the

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Proposed budget cuts dominate Saturday discussion

By David Lias
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District 17 Sen. Ben Nesselhuf of Vermillion had to fly solo at Saturday's Cracker Barrel meeting, held at the William J. Radigan Fire Hall Saturday morning.

No one in the audience seemed to mind that his colleagues, Reps. Jamie Boomgardner and Eldon Nygaard, were unable to attend. It gave the audience made up of local citizens who have supported Nesselhuf the past decade one last, one-on-one chance, to meet.

Saturday marked the last legislative Cracker Barrel meeting Nesselhuf participated in. He is not seeking re-election to the state Legislature; he has decided, instead to campaign for election as South Dakota's next secretary of state.

"This is certainly the most difficult session that we've had in the 10 that I've been through," Nesselhuf said. "It's all about the budget, of course."

He earlier had distributed a list of proposed budget cuts for fiscal year 2011, and proposed spending reductions in the fiscal year 2012 state budget introduced last week by Republican lawmakers. The cuts and reductions total approximately \$52.6 million.

"The budget cuts that were announced have, in essence, been described as across-the-board cuts," USD President James Abbott told Nesselhuf, "but essentially, the (state) universities take three times the hit that anybody else does ... it is particularly unfair. Why should we take three times the hit of anybody else? I just don't get that, and I hope there are enough votes to block that."

"This could be interesting," Nesselhuf replied, "because the Republican legislators decided to pick a big fight with the governor. They just haven't seen eye-to-eye for a number of years, and since this is Rounds' last year, I think it's just boiling to the surface."

"The thing that is really alarming is we cut out a total of about \$3.6 million last year (from higher education), so, you're

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Coyotes clinch GWC Title with rout of Houston Baptist

Sophomore guard Louie Krogman scored a career-high 31 points to help the University of South Dakota men's basketball team clinch the Great West Conference regular-season title Saturday night with an impressive 97-84 rout of Houston Baptist at the DakotaDome. The Coyotes' 10th consecutive win gave them their first GWC championship, as 2009-10 is the inaugural season for the league, and moved them to 19-9 overall and 10-1 in the conference. HBU fell to 10-20 and 9-3.

Krogman (White River) scored 25 points in the second half alone and connected on 6-of-8 attempts from behind the arc. Senior guard Roman Gentry (Sioux City, IA) added 24 points, while senior center Steve Smith (Sr., Sioux Falls) added 17 points and freshman guard Jake Thomas (Racine, WI) had 11 points. USD shot 52 percent (33-of-64) from the floor for the game, including 60 percent (16-of-27) from behind the arc, compared to 47 percent (36-of-76) overall for the Huskies.

After leading by nine at halftime, USD found itself down 60-54 with 14:04 to go after a Houston Baptist surge to start the second half. USD answered with a decisive run, however, going on a 28-6 spurt to take an 82-66 lead



USD Coyote Tyler Cain helps cut down the nets following South Dakota's victory over Houston Baptist Saturday. The win gave the Coyotes their first GWC championship. (Photo by Cindy Johnson Brown)

and Krogman was the catalyst, as he scored 15 points during the stretch and Gentry had six. The run proved vital for USD, as Houston Baptist did close the gap to 87-76, but Krogman answered with a three-pointer to help USD ice the win.

Houston Baptist jumped out to an early 18-11 lead over the first six minutes of the game, but USD stormed back, outscoring the Huskies 27-8 over the next nine minutes to build a 38-26 lead.

Thomas and Gentry each had six points during that sequence for USD, while

Smith had five. USD took a 45-36 lead into halftime.

Smith and Gentry keyed the Coyote offense in the first half. Smith had 12 points on 5-of-6 shooting, while Gentry had 10 points. Thomas added seven points, while junior guard Mitchell Bouie (Chicago, IL) had six rebounds and Krogman kicked in six points off the bench. USD shot 50 percent in the first half (17-of-34), compared to 40 percent (15-of-38) for Houston Baptist. USD hit five 3-pointers in the first half, compared to zero for the Huskies.