

## Public invited to participate in Victorian Christmas Tour of Homes

The Clay County Historical Society is pleased to announce the Victorian Christmas 2009 Tour of Homes, a Sesquicentennial event with six Vermillion homes/church. Cleo Erickson and Gloria Barnes are co-chairs for this event.

You may tour homes Friday night, Dec. 4 from 6 to 9 p.m. or Saturday afternoon from 1 to 4 p.m. Tickets are on sale at Nook n' Cranny, Davis Pharmacy, Vermillion Beauty Shop and the Austin Whittemore house at \$12.50 per person. Hosts will check off their home on the ticket as guests enter their homes. This ticket is to also be used for the reception following the tour on either Friday night or Saturday afternoon.

President James and Colette Abbott will host their home on 415 E. Main Street. This is a Neo Classical and Classical revival style of architecture and combines houses built in two locations. The original location was on the bluff south of the Christol home on Forest Avenue and was built in 1873. This historical home is often referred to as the Inman house. This home has served as the residence of university presidents and at one time as the University of South Dakota Alumni House.

Jim and Michelle Laughlin will host their Queen Anne Victorian home built in 1914 on 122 N. Yale Street. Romantic eclecticism is the keynote of this lovely restrained Queen Anne home painted pink and finished with red oak. The Laughlins have restored this historical home that was made up of seven rental units for many years. This home was at one time the KAO fraternity. They have done such projects as refinish the woodwork, the floors, and finished the basement which has a tin ceiling. There is a fireplace, three sets of pocket doors and beautiful oak stair case.

Mary Derby will host her Victorian home at 109 Austin Street. This is a large red historical home built in 1884 on the old bluff and known as the Morgan house. This home was owned by the Morgan family from 1896-1951. One of the many features in this home is the Shakespeare window and fireplace surround with decorative art tile and the hitching post in the back yard. This home was a convent from 1954-1968. Richard Bowen, who later became president of the University of South Dakota, bought the house from St. Agnes Church in 1968.

Kim Allison will host her 1873 home

at 408 W. Main Street. This historical home located on the old bluff was the first house built in upper Vermillion and is known to be the oldest house in Vermillion still in its original location. This is known as the Dillon House in the Schell books. The SD State Historical Society describes this as a "T" shaped house with Victorian and Gothic elements.

The Rev. Sandy Aakre, along with other parishioners, will host the historical First Baptist Church at 101 E. Main Street. Part of the church was originally located below the bluff before the great flood. It is the most prominent Richardsonian Romanesque building in Vermillion.

Dr. Al and Pat Pravecek will host their beautiful traditional with French country decor home at 2804 Archer Court-Rolling Hills Estate. This three-level home with a swimming pool was the fifth one built in this development by Annar Pettersen in 1999. They have since done many high-end upgrades in this lovely home.

The Clay County Historical Society Board of directors will host this event and cordially invite everyone to enjoy the tour and reception.



Brian and Melissa Varns

### Exchange vows

Melissa Hayes and Brian Varns were married May 27, 2009 at Manhattan, KS. Parents of the couple are Duane and Coreen Hayes, Atlanta, GA and Ken and Earleen Varns, Vermillion.

Matron of honor was Megan Incrocci, sister of the bride from Atlanta, GA. Bridesmaids were Kelly Snow and Shannon Phillips, both friends of the bride from Atlanta. Flower girl was Cecilia Reeves. Best man was Danny Gilbert-

son, friend of the groom. Groomsmen were Dustin Schempp and Jeff Kleeman, friends of the groom.

Melissa graduated from Collins High School in Georgia in 2004 and is currently pursuing a degree in nursing. Brian graduated from Vermillion High School and South Dakota State University. He is currently a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army at Ft. Riley, KS. They reside in Manhattan, KS.

## Reflections at Thanksgiving time

By Parker Knox

### GUEST COMMENTARY

"There's always a lot to be thankful for if you take the time to look for it. For example, I'm sitting here thinking how nice it is that wrinkles don't hurt."

That thought isn't original with me, but I wish it were. I read it last week in one of those e-mail forwards that get circulated back and forth across the country.

But nevertheless it is time for thanksgiving. "I am thankful for small mercies," Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote. "I compared notes with one of my friends who expects everything of the universe and is disappointed when anything is less than the best, and I found that I begin at the other extreme, expecting nothing, and am always full of thanks for moderate goods."

For what they're worth, these are some of the things that make me smile and for which I am grateful at Thanksgiving time and throughout the year:

Book stores ... the first cup of coffee in the morning ... distant train whistles ... peanut butter-and-jelly sandwiches ... the sun streaming through stained-glass windows of a church ... a giant cranberry muffin at a Perkins restaurant ... Lake Oahe when it is full to the brim ... wind chimes ... the scent of rain in the air ... the grand march at a high school prom ... Hamburger Helper ... the hometown paper arriving in the mail ... a Twins game on the radio, on TV or in person ... caramel rolls fresh from the oven ... "The Polar Express" ... the USD band marching down the street on the way to the Dome on game day ... a steaming bowl of chili topped with shredded cheese and corn curls ... icicle lights hanging from the eaves ... the music of Michael W. Smith's Christmas CDs ... Duke basketball ... driving through the USD campus on green lights when the students aren't trying to cross Cherry Street ... thick Sunday newspapers ... deviled eggs ... riding the Metro into downtown Minneapolis ... my team's goalkeeper thwarting a penalty kick in soccer ... the aroma of dinner cooking in the crockpot when I get home from church.

The thunder and mist rising from the falls at Falls Park ... "Prairie Home Companion" on the radio or live at the Fitzgerald Theatre ... Christmas letters ... the Vikings ... the view coming down the hill into Custer with the lighted

"CUSTER" sign high on the mountain straight ahead ... the music of "Fiddler on the Roof" and the memories it revives ... the words "winter storm watch" on the weather forecast (unless I have travel plans) ... restaurants where five different games are playing on the TV screens ... hot apple cider ... reruns of the old Carol Burnett variety show ... a surprise e-mail from a long-lost friend ... holiday decorations on the light poles ... the College World Series ... the only true must-see TV--ESPN's "SportsCenter" ... board games around the dining room table at holiday time ... the first glimpse of the roof of the DakotaDome when nearing Vermillion ... fudge ... mighty church pipe organs ... semifinal night at a state basketball tournament ... the newest Michael Buble CD ... my first daughter-in-law and the people in her family ... "Brothers and Sisters."

Still-warm pumpkin pie with Cool Whip ... the music of "Les Miserables" ... discovering the flowers have blossomed ... the spectacle of the state track meet ... the lights of Rapid City from the top of the Wasta hill after a long cross-state drive ... big-band music ... a baseball player stealing home ... a wave from a passing driver ... a college campus in the fall ... seeing what excellent mothers my daughters are and what loving uncles their brothers are ... the downtown trolley in Sioux Falls ... "White Collar" ... the students in the USD opera class ... Colt McCoy to Jordan Shipley for a Longhorn touchdown ... the downstream view of the Missouri from atop Oahe Dam ... the aroma of bread baking in the oven ... Storybook Island at Christmastime ... loose change in the bottom of the washer or beneath the driver's seat ... class reunions ... homecoming parades ... the soaring voices of the men of Il Divo ... crossing a stateline ... old yearbooks ... ambrosia salad ... a football Saturday at Nebraska ... the choir processing down the aisle during the opening hymn ... a box of frosted cookies from Granny Franny's oven.

The rush of spotting a car with a license plate from my home county ... pumpkin bread ... Joe Mauer and Justin Morneau ... graduation receptions ... "Remember the

Titans" ... downtown Rochester with its shops, restaurants and skyscraper hospitals ... doughnuts with maple frosting from Wall Drug ... Olivia, Dylan and Audrey, the treasures of my life, the grandkids who make every day worth getting up for, even though they are hundreds of miles away ... the bells, whip cracks and horse whinnies that accompany "Sleigh Ride" ... the new football stadium at Augustana ... the welcome I get from Oliver (German shepherd) and Winnie (black Lab) after being away from them for several months ... a ride on the 1880 Train ... the ability to keep track of old friends' lives on Facebook ... church choirs ... the Black Hills Playhouse ... the endless sunset seen from the central South Dakota prairie ... Handel's "Messiah" ... a new Nicholas Sparks book ... sweet potatoes smothered in marshmallows ... a warm summer night at the ballpark ... the people and dogs you meet at the dog park ... a community theater's summer musical.

The lyrics of "I'll Be Home for Christmas" and the memories of long-past Christmases in Onida and Pierre they invoke ... my son-in-law, the best possible dad my granddaughters could have ... hearing one's governor or congressman call you by name (only in South Dakota) ... the view from Vermillion of the Nebraska river bluffs three miles away ... summer band concerts in the park ... discovering a checkbook error in my favor ... a

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