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PLAIN TALK

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On Oct. 23, the Vermillion City Hall Council Chamber was the site of a forum of candidates for the Clay County Commission, as well as District 17 Senate and House of Representatives.

(Photo By David Lias)

District 17 candidates discuss issues

By Travis Gulbrandson
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The City Hall Council Chambers were filled almost to capacity Tuesday, Oct. 23, when area political candidates held a forum in which they discussed their views on a number of state-related issues.

District 17 candidates for the state Senate and House of Representatives were among those present.

One of the issues touched on was the surplus in the state treasury that followed cuts to education.

Former teacher Marion Sorlein, a Democrat running for the House, said that a 10 percent cut to education doesn't seem necessary when 11 percent of the state's budget is in reserves.

"It seems to me that (legislators) do know there's money there, and it's kind of a trick to put it into reserves, because now (they) get to dole it out one year at a time," she said. "That doesn't make sense to me. It seems like a power play. Although I don't know all the ins and outs of the budgeting, I think that needs to be stopped."

Democratic House candidate Ray Ring, an economist who taught at the University of South Dakota, said it's like "squirreling away this money" for a rainy day fund, but not spending it when the rainy day arrives.

"I've looked at some of these things over the years because of what I teach and the research that I do, and most people feel that 5 percent (in reserves) is probably adequate," Ring said. "It's probably even less than that for South Dakota, because we have a very stable tax structure."

Under the current system, the state ends up with one-time monies going into or coming out of the general fund, which "makes for very difficult

budgeting," Ring said. Senate candidate and current representative Tom Jones said that two years ago the legislators were told the state had a \$127 million deficit, which made 10 percent across-the-board cuts a necessity.

"All of a sudden, this year we've got around an \$87 million surplus," said Jones, a Democrat. "That tells me something about the budgeting that we did. This is the worst we've ever seen in the history of South Dakota, where we mis-budgeted that far. We overestimated our expenses and we underestimated our income by a tone of money."

Republican Senate candidate John Chicoine, of Parker, said it was a good thing the state had its "rainy day fund" because of the widespread flooding seen in 2011.

"When the floods came, we gave out some of that money to Pierre, Dakota Dunes and some of those places," Chicoine said. "We loaned that

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CHICOINE

JONES

RING

SORLEIN

County commission candidates have diverse backgrounds

By David Lias
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A fifth county commission candidate, Stanley Peterson, was unable to attend the forum.

Voters will be asked to select three from this slate of five candidates in the at-large county commission election scheduled Nov. 6. Passick and Powell are incumbents, Peterson and Mockler have both unsuccessfully sought the office in a previous election, a Bremer, who for years has served as county auditor, is running for commissioner as she plans to retire from her present job.

"I have been at the county courthouse for 23 years," Bremer, a lifelong resident and wife of Paul Bremer, said. She served eight years as deputy county auditor before being elected auditor.

"I have been working with the county commission for the past 15 years and sitting in on almost every meeting," she said. That experience, Bremer said, has given her a strong background in issues important



POWELL

BREMER

MOCKLER

PASSICK

to the county, such as joint jurisdiction with the city, drainage, and zoning.

"As a county auditor, I have worked with budgets and presented revenue figures," she said. "I feel I am one of the best candidates for this job, since I have been there and know about all of these different issues that come up."

Mockler is also a life-long county resident, who grew up on a dairy farm east of Vermillion. After graduating from VHS and SDSU, he returned to Clay County and worked for area farmers before beginning his own farming operation 14 miles north of Vermillion. He and his wife, Jill, are parents of two daughters.

Mockler has become involved in several organizations in recent years. He is currently on the board of directors of the South Dakota Corn Growers Association, and Clay County Farm Mutual Insurance. He is also a member of Clay County Planning and Zoning Board.

"I decided to run for commissioner in order to help the board get a better balance of knowledge, age, and perspective. Agriculture is our number one industry in Clay County, and it's our largest tax base in the county. I feel this sector needs direct representation," he said.

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Deadly Medicine:

Exhibit brings USD a close view of the Holocaust

By Travis Gulbrandson
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Through the end of the year, visitors to USD's I.D. Weeks Library will be able to get an up-close look at one of the darkest eras of modern history.

That's because until Jan. 6, 2013, a portion of the library's second floor will be home to "Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race," a traveling exhibit from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The exhibit explains how Nazi leaders used science to legitimize persecution, murder and genocide.

"It's about eugenics, experimentation and ethical considerations," explained Danielle Loftus, technology/fine arts librarian.

The exhibit is located past the main stairway on the west side of the library. It consists of panels, which display a combination of photographs, videos, posters, documents and other printed material.

"I really respect the way they present these images," Loftus said. "It's for all levels of people. (But) because of the subject matter, you might not want to bring your five-year-old, because some of the videos and some of the images might be a little disturbing."

"But anybody of any level can understand the information," she said. David Burrow, Ph.D., associate

professor of history at USD, said the exhibit provides a variety of materials focusing on those victimized by the Third Reich.

"There are photographs of people who were victims of different policies of sterilization early on," he said. "There are pictures of infant children who were killed during the Nazi euthanasia program. There are the charts and propaganda materials that the Nazis distributed to convince people of their ideas of how to create a master race by having the right people marry and reproduce. There's a lot of that."

Loftus said that while some of the content is intense, it doesn't "hit the viewer over the head."

Burrow agreed, saying that some portions of the exhibit leave people to draw their own conclusions, which he finds "one of the most valuable ways to teach."

"You present people with accurate information and you tell them what you know, but the ultimate conclusions you leave up to the students," he said. "Certainly one of the things that I would draw out of this exhibit is how you can take the process of science to a chillingly logical conclusion – the idea that some people are better than others."

"But the root of this is the idea that some people should not live," he said. "It's a very disturbing concept," Loftus said.



A USD student walks through "Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race," a traveling exhibit from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum that will be on display on the second floor of the I.D. Weeks Library through Jan. 6, 2013.

(Photo By Travis Gulbrandson)

"What this exhibit shows you is why people could be persuaded to think that wasn't a disturbing concept," Burrow said.

"Deadly Medicine" came to USD as a result of an application filled out by Loftus, and is one of several traveling

exhibits from the Holocaust museum.

"This is the one that I thought would be interesting for our population," she said.

Funds from a South Dakota Humanities Council grant has allowed the Holocaust education effort to be

expanded by making it possible for two lectures to be delivered on the subject later this month.

The first – "Of Foxes and Poisonous Mushrooms" – is by Carol A. Leibiger,

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