

Yankton City Commission approves USD hangar agreement

By Nathan Johnson

nathan.johnson@yankton.net

The Yankton City Commission agreed Monday to enter a lease agreement with the University of South Dakota for hangar space at the Chan Gurney Municipal Airport.

According to a memorandum written by City Manager Doug Russell, the university has acquired a new aircraft and needs a place to

store it until a suitable facility is built in Vermillion.

The 12-month lease for use of the corporate hangar at Chan Gurney will be for \$750 per month.

The agreement is structured similarly to a lease with Kolberg-Pioneer, Inc., (KPI) of Yankton. The manufacturing firm also rents space in the corporate hangar.

However, its lease is \$950

per month. Commissioner Dave Carda, a KPI employee, asked about the difference.

Russell said one of the reasons for the price discrepancy is that the KPI agreement includes a guarantee of 12 off-hour entrances and exits into and from the hangar.

"With this agreement, they would have none of that guaranteed," he stated.

"They would either have to coordinate with our (fixed-base operator at the airport) at an agreed-upon price, or they would have to bring over their own equipment and move it out themselves."

Another reason for the higher price is that KPI agreed in 2008 to a lease above the market price to help cover utilities and construction costs for the then-new facility.

Merkle will share story at Bergen

Bret Merkle will share his amazing story of "Tragic Blessing" at Bergen Lutheran Church, rural Meckling, as part of the annual "Come to the Table" event on Sunday, Oct. 30 at 2 p.m.

Bret's inspiring story recounts the touching story of his journey from athletic achievement and physical strength as a two-time all-state quarterback, to surviving a harrowing motorcycle accident that left him fighting for his life and permanently paralyzed from the waist down. Bret fought through 20 surgeries, six months in the hospital and years of physical rehabilitation. Through it all,

Bret learned how to walk again and although still eighty percent paralyzed, Bret says he walks by faith. Bret continued on with his education in spite of his physical limitations and chronic pain. He finished with a law degree and an MBA degree and is now a trial attorney in Sioux Falls.

All are welcome to attend this event and hear the inspiring story of how Bret Merkle overcame many obstacles to find victory and joy in life. "Come to the Table" is sponsored by the Bergen Lutheran Church WELCA. The church is located seven miles west of Vermillion on Timber Road.

SCHOOL

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pioneers, like educators of today, faced daunting challenges. But they never let that stand in the way of offering a quality education to our area's youth.

That's what Marion Kryger, a retired Vermillion farmer, remembers the most about his eight years of attending Norway School #3, one of the many rural schools that one time dotted the landscape of Clay County.

"I've farmed my whole life after that, and my needs have been well met," he said. "Wouldn't it be great if people would just be satisfied with where they are and what they have, and strive to do better with what they have?"

People like Kryger, who value the lessons that can be learned by preserving history, also have provided a key service in the production of this week's Heritage edition by initially compiling much of the information and photos we've been able to share in this special publication.

The stories and photos we are able to share have been compiled by such writers as Herbert Schell, Kathleen Block, and past editors of the Plain Talk who, through the years, reported on the development of Vermillion's elementary and high school buildings, and introduced new terms to the community's vocabulary. Phrases like East Side, West Side, and eventually North Side.

We also had some wonderful one-on-one conversations with

local people well versed to talk about the history of education in Clay County and Vermillion, for they have either researched that history, or lived it themselves. People like Fern Kaufman and Donna Gross, Margaret Bierle and Rosalie Hubert, Cleo Erickson and Kryger.

A project Kryger hopes to complete one day involves compiling a photographic record of every eighth grade graduation that occurred in Clay County during the area's rural school era. It's a project he's devoted his efforts to for the past decade.

The county's rural schools offered classes in grades first through eighth. When one completed the eighth grade, they took part in a graduation ceremony, but not at their individual school. Every eighth grader from every rural school gathered together in Vermillion to mark the milestone of ending their country school education to move on to classes the next fall at Vermillion High School.

"At this graduation, you get your diploma and they take your picture," Kryger said. The eighth graders of the entire county would all graduate at once, at a ceremony that was usually held in Vermillion."

He is following a process very similar to the one used in the production of this week's Heritage edition - lots of research.

"I think in some of the years, for example 1916-1917, I don't have a picture for those graduations," Kryger said. "I think there was a split graduation that year. I go to the archives at the library and look for the articles

about the graduation. That's where I get the names.

"Once I get the names," he added, "I know somebody who will know somebody who will know somebody that I can get in contact with, and eventually I'll get a picture."

It's identifying the individuals in the photos that is Kryger's biggest challenge at the moment. A photo stream of the pictures he has collected may be viewed by logging on to www.flickr.com/photos/46877599@N08.

One is presented with Clay County eighth grade graduation photos dating from 1970 all the way back to 1896. The photos are in place. The challenge that remains is trying to identify the people in each picture.

Time has taken away many, and in some cases, all of the students featured in many of the older photos. Gone with them are their memories of not only those golden school days, but also the identity of their classmates.

That hasn't stopped Kryger's efforts, however. He's still vigilant, hoping to unearth some unseen nugget of information that will

provide more complete information to the compilation of eighth grade graduation photos.

"Eighth grade graduations were a big deal," he said. "And one interesting part of this is I'm asking different people, 'What do you remember about your graduation?' Most of the guys say, 'Oh, it was hot,' or they don't really remember it. Nearly 60 to 70 percent of the women I've talked to say, 'I don't remember the day, but I remember the dress I wore.' Back in the past, a nice dress wasn't something you had a lot of. That's kind of interesting."

Kryger is still trying to track down eighth grade graduation photos for the years 1919 and 1923. "I've just been unable to find them," he said. "Maybe there wasn't a photo taken those years."

There were no photos in 1916 and 1917, he believes, either because of World War I, or because a split graduation was held in those years.

"There are also a few photos from the early 1900s that I don't have," Kryger said. "But I made every effort to get them that I can think of."

He hopes the Heritage editions

focus on the history of education in Clay County "will spark something."

"If I can do anything for anybody, that's what I want to do," Kryger said. "I can help them genealogy-wise, and maybe help them learn where a certain ancestor, like a grandfather, for instance, may have attended country school. People moved around a lot out of the farms, especially in the '30s."

"My birth family lived in a lot of different places in the county before I was born," he said. "They were busy working on the farm, and March was moving time. If you were moving to a different farm, you usually did it on the first of March."

Kryger jokes about his efforts to compile this valuable piece of history, and some of the challenges he still faces.

"I'm not aware of any other county that is doing this to this degree. I've told everybody that you've got to be a little bit Norwegian, and not very smart to even start this," he said with a laugh. "But, you know, it's part of giving back to a community where you have your roots. There

are a lot of people that interested, and there are a lot of people that could care less. And that's being honest. But for those who care and really want to know, history is important."

Kryger still remembers how large Norway School #3 seemed to be during his very first day of first grade. He remembers the "recitation bench" at the front of the classroom, where members of each individual class would sit together to receive their daily lessons from their teacher. He remembers the furnace that the teacher kept burning all winter long in the building's basement, and how everyone brought their own lunch to school.

And he remembers a unique camaraderie shared among every student at Norway School #3.

"We all looked out for one another," Kryger said. "I think there was the normal amount of teasing that would go on between kids, but I don't remember any fighting. It seemed like all of the kids always got along with everybody else."

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You can send your photo and a message (up to 20 words) of their service in the United States Military and a check or money order for \$5.00. Photos will be run in color unless a black and white photo is what is provided to us. All Honor Ads will also appear online at www.plaintalk.net.

Pictures will be returned if you provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope or you can pick your photo up at the Plain Talk office any time after November 11, 2011.

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