

Fall Storytime Set To Start

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

It's time to start up another semester of Storytime at Vermillion public library.

According to Children's Librarian Beth Knedler, times have been switched up a little to hopefully accommodate as many participants as possible.

The times are as follows: Fall Art Storytimes (ages 4 & up) on Mondays at 5:30 p.m., Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. and Saturdays at 10:15 a.m. Fall Movement Storytimes (ages birth to 3 with adult) on Tuesdays at 10:15 a.m. and Saturdays at 11:15 a.m. "My Tuesdays are usually pretty full," Knedler said. "We have a good number of people in there."

According to Knedler there is no limit to the number of participants in the movement Storytimes due to the larger room it is held in.

Though the art Storytimes are held in a smaller room with much more limited space, Knedler has not as of yet had to turn anyone away.

Knedler also wished to point out that though registration is encouraged so librarians know how many children to expect, you do not have to have registered to attend Storytimes and registering does not mean a commitment to attend every Storytime.

There is also no age cap, especially for the art projects.

"Usually it's three and up and when I say 'up' I mean up," Knedler said. "If parents and grandparents want to come in and make the art after the story I'm open to that as well."

Even kids that have started school Knedler said are welcome if they happen to come when they have a day off. "I say they can still come to Storytime," she said. "Everyone likes to be read to."

Knedler is looking forward to a great semester of stories, songs and activities especially with the movement Storytimes geared towards a younger audience.

"I am doing some different things with them where I've got little activities that I'm starting to get ready that will help with fine motor skills,"



Knedler said. "I've got beading which I've got to watch size-wise so it's not choking hazards. There are activities to do because it's a movement thing. I had some kids that didn't really care for the parachute last time. I'll trade it up. There are some things that I'll repeat. Kids at that age do need repetition of things. There will be two books instead of three books then the activity that they will do."

The art students will have no lack of activity either with stories chosen based on the art method or subject for the week.

"It will be new books, new activities," Knedler said. "Sometimes I actually have to buy the book that relates to what I want to teach and I do sometimes pick what I want to teach before the book. There are other times I get a book and I know what I want to do with it. One of the books actually had something with bubble wrap in it. As soon as I saw that I knew that would be perfect with printmaking with bubble wrap that give it that implied texture. Typically it is the project and then I find the book."

Knedler finds great fulfillment when her messages get across.

"When the kids get excited and show me that they understand the concepts I'm teaching, it's a wonderful feeling," she said. "I like when they understand when there's a moral of the story as well. A lot of them totally get what's going on. Just to watch and see that they're getting what's going on in the book is wonderful as well."

Knedler's Storytimes did have a theme over the summer and she hopes to continue.

"This time I think I'm going to work with my elements and principles again," she said. "I think for some kids it will be repetitive but it's something they need to have. It's lacking in the school system and they need to hear it as much as they can. There's kids that I do Beyond School Adventures art with after school and there's times that I'm talking about primary colors and there's some kids that never got it and don't get it so I'd like to make sure by the time these preschoolers get into second or third grade they'll know it then you can move on and do other, more exciting things."

Sometimes being able to cover the basics takes some research.

"Actually with this one I got online to see if we had things related to the primary colors," Knedler said. "I wasn't really finding anything in our collection so I would just get online and google something."

Whatever Knedler does must work because the kids want more.

"Sometimes I've had books that it wasn't a suggestion as much as I did it and they wanted it again and again," she said. "Suggestions are always good."

Knedler described what a typical Storytime is like for parents who might be unfamiliar.

"When they do the art story time they come sit on the carpet," she said. "Before we start I like to talk about what we did the week prior. I relate the new one to the one we did before. We read through a book, we discuss what happened in the book. After the book is read I'll go over what we're doing that week. We talk about our medium, what we're using and how we're going to create it. Sometimes we work in 2-D sometimes we work in 3-D and I try to use as many concepts as I can."

"With the movement it's a little different. When they come in we read a book. I try to get books that have some theme to them. We read a book and listen to a song, read a book and listen to a song with shakers. Then we'll get the activity out and they'll get to do some hands-on projects."

Interested parents can register online at vermillionpubliclibrary.org.

First Nighters: Sharing The Love Of Theatre

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

Theatre aficionados in Vermillion and surrounding area have found a way to support budding talent at the University of South Dakota by donating to the First Nighters scholarship fund.

"The first-nighters is an organization that its members of the community not just located in Vermillion," said USD Theatre Interim Chair Raimondo Genna. "They contribute money to the department and the First Nighter's talent scholarship which pays for students' education."

According to Genna, members of First Nighters are invited to social events which take place on opening night of USD theatre productions.

"We have usually the director or some special guest come in and talk about the production that they're about to see," he said. "We get together for food, drinks and talk and generally enjoy each other's company then go see the show. It's the highlight of our production calendar. Socials are big to plan and participate in. We have organizations that hold socials with us so the President's office usually hosts one social per year. Last year and it looks like this year the USD foundation hosts something for us."

Genna said that the theatre department is hoping to expand membership in First Nighters to bring more people in to enjoy the theatre and contribute to the scholarship fund.

"The biggest reasons to donate, usually they are patrons who have seen our shows and they've enjoyed the work that we do and they wish to help the students with their education," Genna said. "A lot of times we have newer faculty members who come in and they join. It's a way for them to integrate themselves into the larger USD community."

Though some members of First Nighters are USD alumni, most aren't according to Genna.

"They really are people who just love the theatre and want to contribute," he said.

Becoming a member is easy according to Genna.

"If they wanted to become a member if they contact us we would just send them a welcome letter and a form to fill out with the various levels of contribution that they can enter in as," he said. "It can be as little as \$100. With that you get season subscription to our shows. It can go as high as they feel comfortable contributing. There are various membership levels. As a way of thanking them there is a mention of them in our programs. We have a couple of members who kind of pool their resources then collectively donate to First Nighters. That happens quite often."

The value of scholarships to a college student means they can focus on their studies rather than dollars in the bank.

"It helps them pay for an education," Genna said. "That way students aren't having to rely on going to work to help pay for school so they can focus more time on their studies."

It also comes back to benefit the community according to Genna.

"The bigger the donation pot can be, the more talented students can come in and we can be competitive regionally and beyond," he said. "As First-Nighters one of the greatest rewards is to see this young, talented person come in and enjoy their work then over the process of four years see them grow and know they helped contribute to that student's education and their growth."

For more information, contact the USD theatre department at 605-677-5418 or visit usd.edu/fine-arts/theatre.

Schmitz

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DC which was really cool."

Schmitz stayed in dorm-type accommodations with three other girls from around the country, waking up at 5:30 every morning to begin preparations for the day's work.

"Every day we wore these navy blue suits and they were very not fun to wear because they were really bulky," she said. "We had breakfast from 7 to 7:30 and it always depended on what time the session started but we would go in and walk over to the building right across from the capitol and we would go through security and we'd go down to an elevator and go down and take a little subway to the capitol."

Schmitz's page duties included preparing the Senate Chamber, assisting Senators, carrying bills and amendments to the Senate desk, and delivery of correspondence and legislative material within the Congressional complex.

"Basically we had to prepare all the desks which included a bill or a calendar of what was going to happen that day," she said. "If the bill was really big you'd have a stack the size of a dictionary. You'd have to set one of those on everyone's desk. Then we'd also take certain stuff

up to certain rooms in the capitol and that was a lot of work because you'd be going from the third floor to the basement and back and forth."

A task not as easy as it sounds according to Schmitz.

"It was hard at first to memorize those places because we learned them on the first day," she said. "On the first day you're rushed with all this information. It was hard the first day because they would ask you to go to a room and drop off this and ask for this and you'd be like 'yeah I can do that' but you'd ask other people to come with you to help you."

It was not only building layouts that needed to be memorized.

"During that first week we had to memorize all the senators by name and what state they were from," Schmitz said. "That was really hard because coming into that I didn't know most of the senators. I mostly knew the two senators from South Dakota. I thought I would be fine and then I came in and you had to know everyone. At the end of the week they tested us and if we didn't get 100 percent on that then we couldn't go on the floor. Once I heard that I thought 'I have to study. I have to get on the floor.' My first time I passed and I was pretty happy about that."

Along with senators from

every state, Schmitz also had run-ins with higher-ups.

"I met the Prime Minister of Scotland," she said. "It was really cool. We were getting on the subway and we turn around and there was lots of people and security and we were like 'who are they?' Next thing I know I'm meeting the prime minister of Scotland. It happened so fast. We got on the subway and were riding away and were like 'What just happened?' That was something that was really, really special."

The Senate sessions themselves were also special according to Schmitz.

"Every day they did the same thing," she said. "They had one senator come up and say the pledge, then we'd have a prayer. It was always so official. We had to stand on the side. Then after that we would set up desks for senators who were going to talk. We'd bring little platforms for if they would show a picture or something during their presentation."

"That was really cool to listen to in senator's speeches," she continued. "You hear that kind of thing on TV but you never hear that in person."

They never knew how long each session would last according to Schmitz.

"If it was late nights then you'd be staying there till 10 working for them and it was stressful because they were really tired and you were

really tired and you have to just push through it," she said. "Every other night we had two shifts. Some people would have an early shift and they would go back to the place we were staying at and the other people would stay at the session that went later and so that was nice to have it on and off. That was pretty much what we did every day."

Far from being boring, Schmitz said she found the process and the discussion fascinating.

Though Schmitz plans to pursue a medical career she said she wouldn't be opposed to participating in politics more later in life.

Looking back at her experience as a page, Schmitz enjoyed both the politics and the historical aspect.

"History, just the wow factor of being there really blew my mind," she said. "But I was mainly there for politics because I like hearing the discussions and the debate. It was really interesting to see the Republicans and Democrats not fighting but arguing over certain topics. When I was listening to people speak I'd either think 'You are so right' or 'I never thought of it that way.' It was really cool to see what other people think or what some of these people do to change our country."

Schmitz said she remembers the senators discussing things like the mistreatment of women in

the military and sharing personal experiences about other topics discussed.

"They shared heartfelt stories that happened to them," Schmitz said. "That was really cool because during the time I was there that was when the killings in the churches in South Carolina was happening and I was lucky enough to listen in on Senator Scott's speech he gave saying lots about how South Carolina was the best state and everything. He talked about how this wasn't fair for the blacks for being treated that way in a church. It brought a lot of tears in that room and it really showed how close everyone is in that room. That was a really cool home-felt story because it was news and he was from there. He went there for the funeral and is really a part of the state and was helping out."

If Schmitz was a senator instead of a page, she said she would bring more justice to the public education system.

"The teacher pay and education in South Dakota, I would do something about that," she said. "That needs to change. Teachers need to be respected more and have more options. I feel like in South Dakota they aren't treated as well as other states. At Vermillion High School we have amazing teachers and they aren't

respected enough overall. That's something I would have brought up in the South Dakota area."

Schmitz said she feels profoundly grateful for her experience in the US Senate Page program.

"No one knows what it feels like and just how lucky I was to be over there," she said. "Not a lot of people have the opportunity to go and serve for the highest ranked people in the US. Seeing some of these people I kind of took a step back like, 'Wow, it's actually you.' Maybe they will be the new president. It was really cool to meet them and talk to them. Not a lot of people experience that."

"I got to travel to Georgetown. I even got to see President Obama from afar just at a congressional baseball game. A lot of people when I tell them they aren't excited as I was but if they would have been there they would have been excited. I wish I could go back there now and do that all over again. It was probably the best thing I've ever done and a really amazing experience. I couldn't thank Senator Thune enough. It opened my eyes to politics. It really made me want to become a senator when I'm older or maybe something bigger."

Gifts

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help themselves to get out of the bad situation they're in."

Sarah Nesje, CPS supervisor, gave some ideas for those wishing to donate.

"Most needed items would be deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, toothbrush, toothpaste, those sort of things," she said. "We already have in our supply closet some toys and clothes but the big things are those hygiene products."

Nesje also pointed out that any donated hygiene products should not contain alcohol.

Little donations can make a big difference according to Ashley Doyle of CPS.

"It's huge," she said. "Last week we were with a kiddo and he didn't really have his own stuff. He was at someone else's house

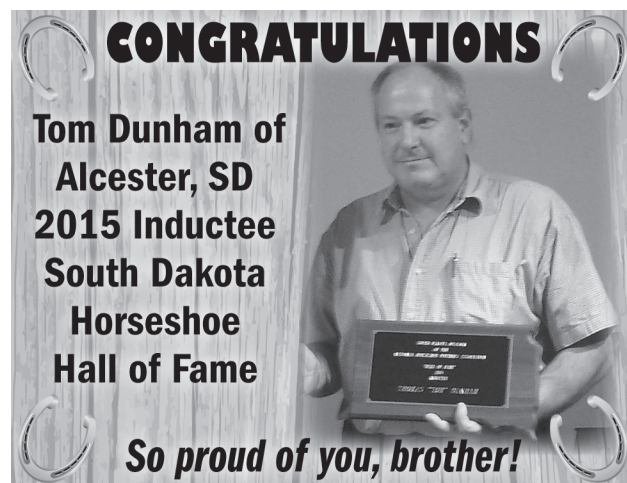
and was sleeping on the couch so having something like this where it's 'my own bag, my own things' is definitely special. Throughout the chaos the kid has something that's actually theirs. It has a big impact."

According to statistics presented in the Lions Centennial newsletter, Vermillion receives an average of 30 children per year into the foster care system. They range from infants up to age 17.

"Lions Club International (LCI) will be turning 100 in 2017," wrote Shannon Grimmond, 5SE Centennial Chairperson. "We not only want to promote what Lions do within our communities, we want to help reach LCI's goal of serving over 100 million people by June 30, 2018. District Governor Jerry Voss has asked that I help with the Centennial Projects and we are going to hit the ground running." Other Centennial pro-

jects in motion include giving the gift of sight to those who are blind or living with low vision, addressing hunger issues and protecting and improving the environment.

Those wishing to donate items to CPS may drop them off at the Department of Social Services office at 114 Market St. Suite 102.



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The Vermillion Police Department reminds you that school is now back in session.

Please use CAUTION when driving near school zones and bus zones.