

Last Call For Painters: Historic Downtown Mural To Get Facelift

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

The time is finally here where the historic mural in downtown Vermillion will get a much-needed facelift.

Monday through Friday the public is invited to come help restore 'Missouri Weave,' the mural on the side of Lumos Studios at 2 East Main St.

According to the head of the project, Phyllis Packard, the painting will begin at 1 p.m. on Monday and last till 6:30 or 7 depending on weather and light. The rest of the week painting will take place from 9 a.m. until 6 or 7 p.m.

"Anything from 45 minutes to a day, come paint with us," Packard said. "What will happen is they will be handed a small pot of paint of a certain color and directed to a specific part and it's sort of a paint by number. They'll be told something like, 'See that shape? Paint this color in that shape.'"

No experience or personal equipment is required according to Packard aside from the obvious.

"You should have some kind of apron or protective shirt over any good clothing," she said. "Painting is painting. I know a couple of people who are older who want to come over and paint. We have some chairs they can sit in and do some lower parts where they can sit and do their painting."

Participants may also bring their own paintbrush if they so desire according to Packard as long as it is a larger brush, preferably two to four inches wide.

Light refreshments are a possibility but not a guarantee according to Packard so painters who plan to attend for

long periods of time should also be prepared with water and snacks.

According to Packard, most accommodations for the project are already set, but certain items are always useful.

"I am looking for sawhorses to put up some planks to be mixing paints on," she said. "We're still also needing any kind of plastic container, preferably with a top like yogurt containers or cottage cheese containers or coffee cans that are plastic that we can mix paint in and hand to people. They can be dropped off at Lumos studios."

The main thing needed now though according to Packard is painters.

"I'm going over to the schools and seeing if we can get the high schoolers and middle schoolers anytime during school or after school," she said. "I have heard from various groups that they're planning to be there. We'll see what happens. There are some USD groups that stated they would be there. I hope they show up. Once school is in session everyone gets really busy. Basically I'm putting out a plea for more painters."

According to Packard, parents should make sure their children are mature enough to paint in the lines.

"We do recommend that kids over the age of 10 or 11," she said. "Basically with the smaller kids, you spend more time repainting what they did so it's pretty hard to accommodate really little kids. Just keep that in mind. Older kids are definitely welcome."

According to Packard the volunteer painters will earn the satisfaction of being part of a city-wide project that lasts for years.

"I know I have at least seven people who have mentioned that they were part of the first painting of it and

they're coming back to paint it again because they feel very much a part of it," she said. "They take ownership on it and it becomes even more part of the community as it is a big part of the community now because of the large number of people that have participated in the past."

It is fun. There's a certain pride with having a brush stroke in there.

"It's part of what they show off in Vermillion," Packard said. "It's what they bring tourists to see. It's definitely something that people remember by the number who have donated from out of state."

Though funds sufficient to complete the actual painting have been procured, more are still being sought through donations and grants for the costs that come with the aftermath according to Packard.

"We have enough to get it painted and cover all those costs," Packard said. "With the grant we'll be asking for it to do the work after it's painted which will be a coating. There's various protection-type coatings that we're going to put on it to make it last longer. We're still researching it. Then the concrete work at the base of the mural needed some plaster or concrete work. That will happen possibly in the spring because I can't get anyone here to do it until October/November or springtime. We tried to get it done before but it will be after the fact."

According to Packard, news on the grants which have been applied for will not be heard for a few months.

For more information contact Packard at Lumos Studios on 2 East Main Street or by calling the studio at 605-624-9222.

USD Presents Altered Book Exhibition 'Bound and Unbound III'

An altered book exhibit on display in the University Libraries at the University of South Dakota features 46 pieces by 37 artists from Canada, Spain, Romania and the U.S. Altered books are mixed media artwork that changes a book from its original form or meaning by various processes like cutting, painting, tearing and collage.

The biennial international exhibition, "Bound and Unbound III," juried by Sandy Brooke, associate professor of art at the College of Liberal Arts at Oregon State University-Cascades in Bend, Oregon, will be on display through Jan. 4.

"I selected books I believed would challenge the viewer and make them interact with the work," Brooke said. "Some artists recycled library books, grinding them into paper pulp and remodeling them. One series crystalized the book in Borax crystals creating a jeweled, reflective surface as if it were something you might find deep in a cave."

Committee member Sarah A. Hanson, digitization and photographs associate at USD University Libraries, said the exhibition showcases artists who have exhibited internationally, nationally and regionally. Some of the artists have works in permanent collections at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Guggenheim, Smithsonian, Center for the Book, National Museum for Women in the Arts and AT&T.

"We are pleased to have such a strong exhibition, representing very competent book artists," Hanson said.

Artists included in the exhibition: Rhonda M. Thomas-Urdang (Arizona); Alexis Arnold, Elizabeth Ashcroft, Ellen Cantor, Adele Crawford, Lauren Kohne, Gina Pisello, Carmen Tostado (California); Guylaine Couture (Canada); Gail M. Nelson (Colorado); Peggy Johnson, Shannon Sargent (Iowa); Erik Demaine, Martin Demaine, Ania Gilmore, Annie Zeybekoglu (Massachusetts); Maria Luppo, Irmari Nacht, Kara Petraglia (New Jersey); Carole P. Kunstadt, Claudia Sbrissa (New York); James Halvorson (Oregon); Janette Chien, Erin Malkowski (Pennsylvania); Manuela Toderas (Romania); Ana Tomas Miralles (Spain); Emily Fleisher, Anna Mavromatis, Michele Mayfield (Texas); Nancy Steele-Makasci (Utah); Shayla Dhingra, Patricia Drummond, Ashley Roth (Virginia); Lynn Skordal (Washington); Edwin Jager, Vicki Milewski, Julie VonDerVellen (Wisconsin).

To read more about each artist and to view a video of the juror discussing the works, see the "Bound and Unbound III" LibGuide.

"Bound and Unbound III" is available for viewing online in the Digital Library of South Dakota.

The exhibition is located in the cases on the second floor of the I.D. Weeks Library at USD and open to the public during library operating hours.

For more information, please contact Sarah A. Hanson at Sarah.Hanson@usd.edu or Danielle De Jager-Loftus at Danielle.Loftus@usd.edu.

Board

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the national spelling bee. I hope that these materials can help other Vermillion Public School Students have the honor of traveling to Washington D.C. in the future."

School Superintendent Mark Froke reported on the slight decline in the district's preliminary enrollment this year.

According to Froke, the district stands at 1,212 students, down from 1,227 this time last year.

"Our enrollment is connected to our state funding," he said. "The state provides a bit of a push in allowing us to average so the difference between averages last year and now this year would be, even though we had a drop of 15 students, it calculates out to 2 students when you average the current year with the previous year."

The most dramatic change in student numbers this year is at Austin school according to Froke.

"We're down about 44 students than we were last year," he said. "We didn't pick up our kindergarten enrollment like we expected to. We had students come to kindergarten roundup and register and then a number of them didn't show up this fall. Last year we had 111 kindergarteners, this year we have 94. For first grade last year we had 115. This year we have 81."

According to Froke, both the middle school and high school are down in enrollment by about nine students. Jolley was overall the same though experienced an unexpected increase in third graders.

Jolley currently has 23 and 24 students per third grade section.

According to the numbers, as Doug Peterson pointed out, 30 students were lost between kindergarten last year and first grade this year.

The causes stand unknown for the most part, though some guesses could be made.

"Many people are leaving because of occupational reasons," Froke said. "Families get jobs out of town and out of state."

The district also enrolls 24 pre-kindergarten students although those numbers are not used for state aid purposes.

Froke also reported on the status of the district libraries which lost data after the recent computer crash.

"I'd like to give credit to all the librarians in the schools for putting the titles back after the computer crash," he said. "I've had conversations with all of them as well as the principals and while I can't say folks are comfortable

with the situation, I think they're settled with how the process is going and it's just going to take some time to get the books back into the computer. From a general standpoint all libraries are functioning and checking books out to students. The process have been facilitated through the purchase of three handheld scanners with four additional scanners to arrive. Librarians have been authorized additional time to work and volunteers and substitute teachers are assisting."

The whole process is estimated to be completed by the end of the semester according to Froke to log the tens of thousands of books housed in the libraries.

Teachers who also lost classroom materials as a result of the crash have been given forms to fill out for the materials to be reinstated.

Committees are being put together to review the issues that have come up as a result of this.

Froke also thanked the teachers and principal of the high school for their hard work in putting the classrooms back together right up till the first couple days before the start of school.

"Within two weeks the heating system will be up and running," Froke said. "I'd encourage you to take a look at that because it's a different world. It's state of the art. The air conditioning is functioning well and the ventilation system is functioning well. Over the next week function lists will be developed so they're going through and they're identifying all the problems that are present and then those will be presented to the subcontractors."

The idea of a community open house at the close of the project was brought up and will be discussed at a later date.

Doug Peterson presented an idea of the school board members having more of a physical presence in the schools in order to feel more connected to the buildings and to be more available and approachable and better take care of the school district. The only concern brought up was that the board members need to retain a certain level of impartiality especially should a hearing come up. Board members opted to table the idea until proper consideration and discussion could take place.

Austin school principal Kim Johnson and Jolley principal Sue Galvin appeared before the board to discuss the new Literacy Program which will be a professional development opportunity for the staff.

"Over the past couple of years the writing picture across the state for instruction has changed," Johnson said. "As we have transi-



SARAH WETZEL/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Ninth-grader and national spelling bee contestant Owen Dudley reported on his experience before the school board Monday and made a donation of his study materials.

tioned to the new writing standards, as we looked at the writing strand within the English Language Arts writing standards we saw the breakdown of the three types of writing and how they are specified in the instructional components."

Seeing the breakdown of narratives, informational texts, and writing in pieces and defending an argument makes the school leadership consider the implications for them, the students and the teachers according

to Johnson. It leads them to consider support that can be provided to help with the new level of instruction.

"Then we look at what is a high-quality research-based instructional component and curriculum that we can train our staff and provide professional development on would be valid and reliable and doable," Johnson said. "As we thought this through we saw that this wasn't a one-workshop focus. It would take a

whole term emphasis."

The proposed measures include mentoring and coaching by a visiting professional who will hopefully assist the staff of the district over a span of a few years according to Johnson and Galvin.

"This is a partnership between the community, the school, the teachers, the students and the parents," Galvin said. "We're calling it Literacy Learning for Life with kind of the vision that we can up the game with writing skills for our students. Our goal is for these kids to be lifetime writers."

According to Galvin, more than merely planning an agenda, they are focusing on where they want to go and how the principals can help them get there.

"This is a fabulous opportunity for our district," she said.

Curt Cameron of the high school shared general ACT results received.

According to Cameron about 80 percent of the senior student body took the test with many ahead of the state average.

Cameron stated that great lengths are taken to ensure that the students consistently score above the state average as they are currently doing.

Cameron presented numbers from the four main areas of the test.

For English Vermillion High School averaged 21.1 compared to the state average of 21.

VHS's math average was 22.1 with the state average being 21.7.

Students at VHS averaged 23.5 in reading compared with the state average of 22.4.

In science VHS averaged 22.7 with the state average being 22.1.

The overall collective average by VHS was 22.4 according to Cameron with the state average being 21.9 and

things look even better for the future.

"I'm really excited about this year's senior class," he said. "We're starting to get back some of our scores and they're in the 30's. We believe we are going to be at our target goal next year, right around 24. Also in this class we have three national merit scholars. We anticipate this going up quite a bit. Congratulations to last year's seniors doing as well as they did and keeping us above that state average."

Len Griffith appeared before the board to present results of the Smarter Balanced test; however a notice had been received that day saying they were not allowed to release any of the state information till the September 22.

The multi-phase test was carried off 'without a hitch' according to Griffith.

"The manpower for that to be able to go through it with the hardware and the software, being able to do the accommodations, it was all online and we carried it through," he said. "Between the administrators and the staff they carried it through."

From what Griffith could share, the students seemed to perform very well and the results will help teachers assess areas where instruction was lacking and discover ways in which they can improve

In other business, bids were approved for the house materials for the Residential Construction Program at Vermillion High School.

Preliminary work has been done including laying out the footprint of the house inside the building which the house mover is confident can get out the door with only a few inches on each side.

Teachers and students are reportedly very eager to begin the project.

70th Wedding Anniversary

Please Join
Frank & Ginny Putz
In celebrating their
70th Wedding Anniversary
Saturday
September 26, 2015

OPEN HOUSE
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm
At the Vermillion
Public Library
18 Church Street
Vermillion, SD
No Gifts Please!

ORDINARY GRACE
A NOVEL
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
WILLIAM KENT KRUEGER
EDGAR AWARD
WINNER

One Book South Dakota at the Public Library

Monday, September 21st
3:30-5 pm
Facilitated discussion group

5-6:30 pm
Meet & Greet with Author William Kent Krueger! at Razieli's, 13 W Main St

7-8 pm
Author presentation at the library

EDITH B. SIEGRIST
VERMILLION PUBLIC LIBRARY
18 Church Street, Vermillion
677-7060