

## GET TO THE POINT



COURTESY PHOTO

The 'Get To The Point' half-marathon will be held this Saturday in Elk Point with proceeds going to fund the Clay-Union Foundation Scholarships.

## Local Half-Marathon To Benefit Youth Of Clay And Union Counties

BY SARAH WETZEL

For the Plain Talk

With the running season well under way, the Clay-Union Foundation is holding its second annual 'Get to the Point' half marathon Saturday.

The race will begin at the Casey's at exit 18 off I-29.

"Registration will start at 7:20 a.m.," said the foundation's founder John Gille. "We have plenty of shirts and plenty of food. It's a 13.1 mile course. Walkers will leave at 8:15 a.m. Runners will leave at 8:30 a.m. When they get back we'll have pizza, bagels, cookies and chocolate milk. Runners like to carb load after so that's why we do that. We'll have a number of extra shirts for sale as well as a number of other items for sale. It should be a good time."

Though only in its second year, the run already draws a crowd from a wide range.

"We've got runners so far from Jacksonville, Florida, one from Irvine, California, one from Minnesota, one from Lincoln Nebraska," Gille said. "We've got a number from Iowa. There's quite a few of them coming from Nebraska."

It's a good enough race to catch the eye of running enthusiasts apparently.

"In a lot of cases we have runners who want to compete in each state who happen to be in the area," Gille said. "Last year we had a runner from Oklahoma city that wanted to compete in all 50 states and he was going to be in the area anyway so he came to our race. We put it on runsignup.com which is a national site and that's linked to running in the USA which is another website and that's nationwide. Runners just go to different races and see what they like."

Though registering online beforehand was an option, walk-in entries are welcome according to Gille.

Registration the day of the race costs \$50 according to Gille.

"Doing the run last year we had 44 preregistered and we had eight walk-ins so we had a total of 52," Gille told the Plain Talk last week. "Now we're at 48 with a week to go. We keep creeping up."

When Sioux City held their races they put in in a few years ago, their first year they had 42. When Yankton had their first races six years ago they had 45. So we beat both of them that first year."

Organizing a run like this is no walk in the park according to Gille.

"It's taken an unbelievable amount of time," he said. "I started on this in April getting the state and the county permits and stuff. It takes a lot of effort but I really enjoy it and it helps support our mentoring program. We used to be supported by United Way but we are no longer funded by them. We need to come up with additional support. We had previously done a bike ride. Now we're doing a half marathon as well."

While most of the proceeds go to helping fund the local mentoring program, Gille hopes that the race will become big enough to fund other causes as well.

"One thousand dollars of our proceeds from last year went to scholarships for Dakota Valley," he said. "We have a community service scholarship that we started four years ago and this is our fifth year coming up. We're giving scholarships two to Vermillion, two to Elk Point and this year one to Dakota Valley. Our donations are down about 30 percent so anything we can do to bring funds in is going to be good."

The Clay-Union Foundation began in 1997 and picked up Clay County in 2000.

According to Gille, more than 100 matches have been performed, connecting youth with adult volunteers who give their time to build a relationship.

"There is a lot of interest in Clay County and that's where I spend most of my time," Gille said. "We are open to new members and mentors. We have grandmas and grandpas, we have single parents, we have students that are finishing up a degree."

Visit [www.clay-unionfoundation.org](http://www.clay-unionfoundation.org) for more information on the mentoring program, clicking on the 'sign up' tab to register a child.

John Gille can also be contacted for information on the mentoring program or the half-marathon at 605-421-5050.

### USD Alumni Association To Recognize Three Graduates At Dakota Days

The University of South Dakota Alumni Association will recognize three graduates for Public Service, Professional Achievement and Service to the University during Dakota Days weekend.

The Alumni Achievement Awards will be presented at a dinner Friday, Oct. 2: Public Service to David Gilbertson (1975), of Pierre, chief justice of the South Dakota Supreme Court; Professional Achievement to Dr. John Hallenbeck (1964), of Kensington, Maryland, chief of the stroke branch of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders & Strokes; and Service to the University to Susan Tuve (1969), of Vermillion.



Attention All Area  
VETERANS

We will assemble at the  
Sanford Hospital corner (Plum & Main)  
at 9:30 am for the  
Dakota Days Parade  
Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>

# Dragons Are Too Seldom

## Puppet Productions Dazzle At Library

BY SARAH WETZEL

For the Plain Talk

For Markie Scholz, puppets are not mere toys, but a valuable medium for teaching important lessons.

"It is one of the best teaching tools I have ever come across," Scholz said. "All the way through to senior citizens, it works beautifully and magically. I think a lot of the reason is puppets allow you to come out of your box. Everybody knows what they think you are and you know what you think you are but if you put something on your hand over here you can experiment with any personality you want and if you like it you can incorporate some of it back into you and if you don't it's just a puppet and it has nothing to do with you."

Scholz has seen the magic work on kids throughout her career as a puppeteer.

"Very often kids who are very shy will be very aggressive with a puppet and vice versa," she said. "Kids that are just over the top all the time will put a puppet on and very often it's shy. They're experimenting. It gives them a way to experiment with different personalities and I've watched it work over and over again. I've been doing this for 46 years."

Having earned a Master's Degree in curriculum education, Scholz not only gave two entertaining performances for children at the Vermillion Public Library last week but also provided a hands-on puppet-making workshop as well as an adult in-service Wednesday afternoon.

Participants learned to make a puppet and discussed script writing and the process of creating a show, learning ways to use it in a classroom.

"One of the real problems when people start working with kids with puppets is that they drag it out so it becomes boring," Scholz said. "You want it to be really spontaneous, really energetic and taking a short amount of time because even though you won't get the great quality of puppets you'll get the excitement and that's what makes puppets work no matter what."

Kids also got a crash-course in puppetry through the hands-on workshop and question/answer sessions after the shows.

"Why didn't we get to see the troll's mom and dad?" asked one child.

"They weren't important to the story so I didn't write them in there," Scholz replied.

Another child asked how the puppets were made.

While the puppets from the hands-on workshop were made from socks, Scholz's puppets used in her shows require a more complicated process.

"First of all I make the shape that's going to be the puppet," she said. "I do that by cutting out darts or cutting out triangles and putting them together with glue so I have the shape



SARAH WETZEL/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Puppeteer Markie Scholz visited the Vermillion Public Library this week performing two shows and presenting workshops on puppet making and show writing. Shown here Scholz helps kids begin to operate their newly made puppets and begin forming their personalities.

that I need and I cover it with fabric that I sew.

"The most important part of any puppet is the mouth. It has to fit very, very well. Most mouths you get to by going through the bottom of the puppet and up through the back. Mine I have to have it right in the back because I have to get the puppets on and off so fast."

Scholz also used a different type of puppet in her show.

"These are clothespin puppets," she said showing a group of bird puppets. "There are three heads glued onto a bar and then their bodies are glued onto a second bar. In between the first bar and the second bar I glued a clothespin and the clothespin opens and closes their mouths."

Particularly of interest to the kids was a giant caterpillar puppet.

"You know those 8-inch balls that are foam? That's what her body is," Scholz said. "Then her head is just attached to all of that and her arms, which go every which way."

Scholz's career as a puppeteer began almost unintentionally.

"My sister wanted to start a puppet theater," Scholz said. "She's from Albuquerque; I was in Custer, South Dakota. She picked me up and we went out to New Jersey for our first show. We were going to do it for a summer just for fun and there were just too many miracles. You get to see the best part of people and then you get to move on."

As far as creating shows and puppets, Scholz said sometimes the puppet comes first and sometime the story. Her puppets become characters that can be used in multiple shows as well.

"Zed is one of my favorites," she said displaying a green dragon. "Very often I will write my stories for him."

Scholz sometimes writes stories to assist in the Summer Reading Program.

"The summer reading theme is the same in all 50 states now," she said. "Next year it's going to be 'Ready Set Read.' So I plan for that. I do at

least one show a year for the summer reading program and a show for the schools. So I'd think about what Zed would do in that situation and then I create the characters for that to happen to support that."

According to Scholz, her puppet characters begin to develop personalities of their own as her shows go along.

"They get more and more personality the more shows they're in," she said. "Yesterday I was in Yankton and one kid asked 'How did you make Hedgeie so funny?' and the answer was I've done this show probably three or four hundred times. Each time he takes on more of a personality every time I do it. Since I'm the only puppeteer I don't have to keep track of the lines really carefully. If I go astray then I can cover for myself. They develop into different characters and sometimes they say things that really shock me."

Though exact dialogue may be different each time, the messages of the show are always there, this show in particular teaching about bullying prevention.

"I like soft messages," Scholz said. "In most of my shows the good guys always win, the bad guys are repentant but none of them are as hard a sell as this one is. I don't want to be a nasty teacher. There are so many ways to do it. Your puppets can be super intelligent and not know so much and the kids can correct them. They can share information and that seems to be better for kids to be in on the process instead of being lectured to. One of the statistics is the least effective way to get information to any audience is through lecture. You want to make it interactive so they stay with you. It's just a ball. I love it. This is more fun than anything I know."

For more information on Scholz, her puppets and her message visit [dragon-saretooseldom.com](http://dragon-saretooseldom.com).

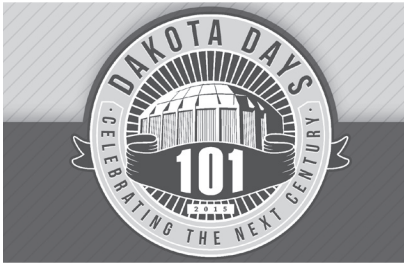
## DDays

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said. "By going to a DJ, everyone who comes down can just enjoy the evening and enjoy being a part of the USD and Vermillion community. We have such a symbiotic relationship between the two that this is a way to promote a positive interaction between the Vermillion community and the USD students, and hopefully have a positive impact on the community, as well."

Wagner said while he is very excited about the Verm Town Bash event, USD student Schae Hanson and Lauren Kulwicki, Events Directors, have planned the week's activities and coordinated with the Campus Activities Board for entertainment beginning on Sunday.

"Sunday we will have a low key event here at the Muenster University Center (MUC) called Dakota Days BINGO from 7-9 p.m.," he said. "Then



on Monday we will have a comedian, Eric Griffin, at Aalf's Auditorium at 7 p.m."

Wagner said tickets for the comedian have been going fast to students, but if someone in the community wants to attend they should be there early to get a seat.

Tuesday, the Yotes Got Talent and the Royalty Reveal will be held at 7 p.m. in Aalf's Auditorium.

"Thursday there will not be a lot going on," Wagner said. "The Al Neuarth Awards will be announced."

Friday there will be a pep rally at the legacy statue at 5 p.m.

## Flu Shot Clinics

Available to persons 6 months & older.

October 1  
8:30am – 2pm

October 12  
10am – 7pm

Flu Shot Clinic at Vermillion Medical Clinic.  
No appointment necessary. The cost will be \$40. We accept Medicare assignment.  
We will also file to private insurance.



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