

Hamiel

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the blue. I was shocked," he said. "Of all the honors that a newspaper man receives, the most meaningful one is bestowed by his peers. For me to be honored by the folks that I worked with, and by a profession that I always felt was my calling, it's just a very humbling thing for me."

Journalism always tugged at Hamiel. Growing up in Lyman County, he spent a great deal of time at the *Chamberlain Register*, a weekly newspaper owned by the parents of one of his best friends. And while attending Northern State, Hamiel reported for the campus newspaper, the *Exponent*.

Hamiel joked he didn't go into journalism for the money, even taking a pay cut compared to teaching.

"My teaching job was still about \$600 more than reporting," he said. "My first newspaper job paid \$130 a week. In those days, there was no overtime, so you worked 70 to 80 hours a week."

Hamiel began his career in 1972 at the *Huron Plainsman* as a sports writer. He also worked at the *Brookings Register*, *Argus Leader* in Sioux Falls, *The Morning Sun* in Pittsburg, Kan., the *Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan* and the *Cincinnati Post* before completing his career as publisher of *The Daily Republic* in Mitchell.

FINDING A HOME IN YANKTON

The *Press & Dakotan* presented a wonderful career move, Hamiel said. Only three months into a 12- to 18-month training program, he was tabbed for the Yankton job.

"It was my first publishing job, and what a great opportunity it was," he said. "In those days, the *P&D* was owned by Stauffer Communications, and I was in their publisher training program. I was in an advertising seminar in Oklahoma City, and I got a call from the vice president of the newspaper di-

vision. He asked, how would I like to go to Yankton, South Dakota? My wife was overjoyed."

Upon arriving at the *P&D*, Hamiel met Harry Speece in the circulation department and his wife, WNAX "Neighbor Lady" Wynn Speece, along with WNAX radio personality George B. German.

For Hamiel, it was like rubbing elbows with celebrities. "When you were growing up in Lyman County, and the only station you got was WNAX, meeting these people, like Wynn, was like meeting folk heroes," he said.

As the *P&D* publisher, Hamiel sought out his readers. In one of his favorite promotions, he visited area farms, meeting with families and taking pictures to show the newspaper's popularity with rural residents.

During that time, he was also pleased to see the birth of the annual Riverboat Days celebration in Yankton and its tremendous growth in subsequent years.

Hamiel found himself part of controversy, teaming up with community leaders who favored an events center. The proposal was defeated at the polls and never came to fruition.

A defining moment for the community during Hamiel's tenure came in December 1984, when Yankton College abruptly closed because of financial problems, he said.

"I wrote the headline story when Yankton College closed," he said. "It was heartbreaking to see the kids walk out of their dorm rooms that day."

For months, the campus remained vacant with no use in sight, Hamiel said.

"We were looking at every option for a vacant college in the middle of a town," he said. "We were looking at a corporate retreat center, a health care center — it was exhaustive."

Yankton even received help from then-U.S. Sen. Larry Pressler (R-S.D.), Hamiel said.

"Larry's chief of staff, Kevin Schieffer, was a kid from just across the river in Nebraska," Hamiel said. "Kevin worked every agency listed in Washington, D.C., until he got down to the last call, and it was the Bureau of Prisons."

The discussions with the Bureau of Prisons led to a controversial proposal — converting the YC campus into a federal prison.

"Larry (Pressler) came to my office and asked, 'What do you think the reaction would be to Yankton having a prison in the middle of the town?'" Hamiel recalled. "I said, 'I think you've got some selling to do.'"

The proposed federal prison was greeted by wariness and even hostility, but the facility became reality, Hamiel said. Even some of the staunchest opponents at the outset now acknowledge the prison's benefits for Yankton, he said.

YC wasn't the only area college to shut its doors in 1984 and later become a prison, Hamiel said. The University of South Dakota-Springfield (USD-S) was closed earlier that year and later converted into part of the state penitentiary system.

Yankton residents showed a great deal of support for the "Save Springfield" effort, Hamiel said. He witnessed the hostility shown in Bon Homme County to then-Gov. Bill Janklow's proposal to turn USD-S into a prison.

"I was at Springfield when Bill Janklow walked into the lion's den at the Springfield Armory (to talk about the prison plan), and he got booed," Hamiel said of the historic, intense meeting.

Hamiel joined those opposed to the USD-S conversion, but he said he remained on good terms until the end with Janklow, who died last January.

CALLING IT A CAREER

Through his years as a journalist, Hamiel won numerous awards for editorial and column writing. He was twice president of the South Dakota Associated Press Managing Editors group and served on the SDNA Board of Directors.

He was named a Lusk Fellow at SDSU in 2007 for outstanding service to journalism and received the SDNA Distinguished Service Award in 2009.

Hamiel said he always sought to connect with his readers — including a personal column on how

his wife made his three daughters' prom dresses.

"You always write for your readers, not for yourself," he said.

Technology has greatly changed journalism during his career, but Hamiel believes the basic foundation remains unchanged.

"We have reached a time when citizens are again looking for a voice in the wilderness, a reliable source of news," he said. "They are bombarded 24 hours a day from countless news sources — some legitimate, some not so legitimate from a professional standpoint. Newspapers are seen as the voice and the place to go for unvarnished news."

When he retired from newspapering in 2007, Hamiel took a position with the South Dakota Community Foundation. He works with about 70 towns statewide, which he sees as continued service to rural areas.

After a career of covering state government, Hamiel served in the South Dakota Legislature from 2008-10. During his first year in office, he successfully sponsored a bill to require transparency for certain no-bid contracts in government. He co-chaired the Governor's Wage Study Task Force and chaired the South Dakota Board of Education.

Hamiel pointed to a family tradition of politicians and admitted he always carried the bug for holding office. "My lifelong goal was serving in the state Legislature," he said.

He has literally come home, as he now resides on the family ranch in Lyman County. He and his wife, Janet, have been married for 38 years. They have three grown children and four grandchildren.

And now, enshrined with a Hall of Fame plaque on the SDSU campus, Hamiel said he feels gratitude for what he considers a calling.

"I couldn't have found a career more rewarding and better suited for my interest or abilities," he said. "I was doubly fortunate, because it was fun in newspapers."

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at twitter.com/RDockendorf

Skills

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"You don't see too many girls in the construction contests," he said. "Of all the other teams, there was only one other girl, and we had three to fill out our team."

Sanger said he was also im-

pressed by how the team did despite their youth.

"To have two freshman and two juniors win state, that's pretty good," he said.

Formerly known as Vocational Industrial Clubs of America, SkillsUSA is a national nonprofit organization that serves high school and college students who are preparing for careers in trade, technical and skilled service occupations, according to the

organization's website.

"SkillsUSA is like FFA except for it has to deal with trades and industry instead of ag," Sanger said. "The leadership contests are almost exactly the same, and they try and get kids aware of careers that are available."

Sanger said one of the benefits of the SkillsUSA competitions is that the students get to interact with professionals from various fields.

"There are a lot of opportunities that develop," he said. "I've had kids walk away with the business cards of major corporations wanting them to come work for them."

The national SkillsUSA competition will take place June 23-17 in Kansas City.

You can follow Derek Bartos on Twitter at twitter.com/d_bartos

OBITUARIES

Barbara Voigt

TYNDALL — A memorial service for Barbara Ellen Voigt of Tyndall will be held at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 27 at the House of Mary Shrine. The Shrine is located 5 miles west of Yankton at 142 Drees Drive.

Following the memorial service, a time of sharing, food and fellowship will be held at the Lewis & Clark Resort Lodge. The route to the lodge will be marked with white balloons.

There will be visitation on Friday from 1:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. at the Goglin Funeral Home in Tyndall.

Online condolences may be sent at www.goglinfh.com.

Barbara Ellen "Barb" Voigt



Barbara Voigt

was born on Sunday, January 2, 1955, at Yankton, South Dakota to Joseph and Margie (Kreber) Zilla. She graduated from Yankton High School in 1973 and re-

ceived her nursing degree from Dakota Wesleyan University. Barb married Bruce Voigt on July 1, 1987 at Yankton, South Dakota. She worked as a Registered Nurse for over 30 years, serving as both a traveling nurse for several years and in Tyndall for many of those years.

Barb passed away on Monday, April 23, 2012 at the Rapid City Regional Hospital Hospice House following a five-year battle with cancer. She was 57 years, 3 months and 21 days old.

Barb is survived by her husband, Bruce Voigt of Tyndall; three children: Joseph Voigt and Joshua Voigt, both of Tyndall, and Kari Voigt of Brookings; two brothers: Joseph (Joan) Zilla of Mitchell and John Zilla of Scott

City, Kansas; and three sisters: Bernie (Ron) Riley of Colorado Springs, Colorado, Mary Kay Zilla of Hill City, and Gerri Sufficool of Colorado Springs, Colorado.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Joseph and Margie Zilla.

Yankton Press & Dakotan
April 26, 2012

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Jerome Sylliaasen

MISSION HILL — Jerome M. Sylliaasen, 75 of Mission Hill died Monday, April 23, 2012, at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, Yankton.

Funeral services are at 2 p.m. Monday, April 30, at Vangen Lutheran Church, Mission Hill, with the Rev. Lance Lindgren officiating. Burial is in the Vangen

Lutheran Cemetery with Military Graveside Rites by the Rudolph Christensen American Legion Post No. 237.

Visitations begin at 5 p.m. Sunday at Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory, Yankton, with a Scripture service at 7 p.m. Visitations will resume one hour prior to the service at the church.

Donald Vennard

Donald Eugene Vennard, 70, of Yankton, retired Master Sergeant from the U.S. Army, died Tuesday, April 24, 2012, at his home.

Burial of Don's cremated remains will be in the Black Hills National Cemetery, Sturgis.

Visitations are 6:30-8:30 p.m. Saturday at Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home and Crematory, Yankton,

with the family present.

G. Dean Bowder

LAUREL, Neb. — G. Dean Bowder, 87 of Laurel, Neb., and formerly of Wynot, Neb., died Tuesday, April 24, 2012, at the Hillcrest Care Center, Laurel.

Funeral services are pending at Wintz Funeral Home, Hartington.



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2012 Riverrat Run And Bike Set For Saturday

The 2012 Riverrat Run and Bike Event will be using the Meridian Bridge and the trail system in and around Yankton and Lewis & Clark Lake on April 28 for the annual Riverrat Run and Bike.

Trail usage will be very heavy between the hours of 8 a.m.-2 p.m. with runners and bikers competing in the event.

Although the trail is not closed to the public on this day, consider alternate times to use the trail to allow participants to do their best.

The Riverrat Run/Bike supports Charlie Battery 1/147th, the Yankton Science Olympiad Teams, the YHS Track Club and The Center.

VA To Hold Outreach Event In S. Sioux City

OMAHA, Neb. — An outreach initiative to provide rural-area Veterans information and counseling about Department of Veterans Affairs benefits and services takes place April 27-28 at American Legion Post 307, 109 E. 19th St, South Sioux City, Neb.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is partnering with the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs, Veteran service agencies, county Veteran service officers and military transition assistance advisors to bring information and services at a Veterans of the Armed Forces Open House.

Veterans and their family members with questions about benefits are encouraged to visit the open house between noon to 7 p.m. April 27 or from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 28.

Representatives from the following agencies will be available to provide veterans assistance and information: Veterans Health Administration representatives from facilities in Nebraska, Iowa, and South Dakota; Veterans Benefit Administration Regional Office; Vet Centers; Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs; and the Nebraska National Guard Transition Assistance Advisor. Community agencies that provide Veteran services will also be available.

Veterans who are not currently enrolled for VA benefits are encouraged to bring their DD Form 214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty," to the open house to assist the agency counselors assess individual eligibility for VA benefits. VA counselors will assist veterans to complete eligibility and enrollment applications.

For additional information about the event, contact Will Ackerman at 800-451-5796, ext. 94719; or Bill Johnston at (402) 987-2120.

The open house is targeted toward veterans who live in the following counties: Cherokee, Crawford, Ida, Monona, Plymouth and Woodbury, Iowa; Antelope, Boone, Burt, Colfax, Cumings, Cedar, Dakota, Dodge, Dixon, Knox, Madison, Pierce, Stanton, Thurston, Washington and Wayne, Neb.; Clay, Lincoln, Minnehaha, Turner, Union and Yankton in South Dakota.

USD Fraternity Holds Week Of Service Events

VERMILLION — The Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity, Kappa Pi Chapter at the University of South Dakota, raised \$4,000 for leukemia and lymphoma research, and domestic violence awareness thanks to the PIKE Week of Service at USD recently.

The chapter also totaled 1,100 hours of community service and donated more than 700 clothing and toiletry items to domestic violence shelters in Sioux City, Iowa, Sioux Falls and Vermillion.

The various community service projects included serving meals at the Vermillion Welcome Table and assembling more than 150 bags for local children in the Vermillion Backpack Program. The events that raised money for charity were PIKES in the Park, Change for Change and Cycle for Life, a national philanthropy event held by the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity. Another highlight during the PIKE Week of Service was the 'Fundie' Run, which raised awareness for domestic violence as participants, dressed in many layers of clothing, ran through campus shedding donated clothing at checkpoints. PIKE collected more than 700 articles of clothing as a result of the run.

USDA To Fund New Projects To Reduce Flooding

HURON — U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Chief Dave White announced that \$7 million in financial assistance will be available to help eligible landowners and operators in three states voluntarily enhance wildlife habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife. The selected states — Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota — will begin to accept applications on April 20, 2012.


"The newly funded Water Bank Program (WBP) provides landowners and operators with an alternative use for their flooded or frequently flooded lands, such as quality wildlife habitat for priority migratory bird species," White said. "When landowners and operators choose to conserve wetlands on private lands in this region, they are protecting more than 300 species of migratory birds that rely on the prairie pothole region for breeding, nesting and resting."

WBP will focus on flood reduction this fiscal year. Severe flooding of agricultural land has been a problem in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, parts of which lie in the prairie pothole region. Eligible land for this year's WBP included flooded agricultural land, flooded hay, pasture or rangeland, and flooded private forestland.

The intent of WBP is to keep water on the land for the benefit of migratory wildlife such as waterfowl. Landowners and operators can sign new 10-year rental agreements to protect wetlands and provide wildlife habitat. Landowners receive annual payments for conserving and protecting wetlands and adjacent lands from adverse land uses and activities, such as drainage, that would destroy the wetland characteristics of those lands.


WBP funding will not cover the cost of conservation practices to enhance wetlands and contracts will not be renewed after the original contract expires. If conservation practices are required to improve migratory bird habitat, eligible landowners and operators can apply to other NRCS financial assistance programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, or available state conservation programs.

For more information about NRCS activities in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, please visit www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov; www.sd.nrcs.usda.gov.



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