

# University Of South Dakota Official Uses Past Experiences To Oversee Department

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — A woman with a diverse teaching background is using her experiences at the U.S. Military Academy and a professional ballet company in overseeing the University of South Dakota's foreign language program.

Laura Vidler said her desire to serve the country after the 9/11 terrorist attacks led her to apply for a position at one of the nation's premier leadership institutions located in West Point, New York, *The Volante* reported.

"For me, it was a great

opportunity because I felt like I didn't have the skills to enlist in the military," Vidler said. "I felt at the time it was some way I could contribute and serve my country in a really difficult and challenging time."

The 12 years Vidler spent teaching Spanish to cadets helped her acquire leadership skills instilled by the academy, she said. She's now trying to implement those skills in her new role as department chair of the modern language and linguistics

department at the University of South Dakota.

Vidler was initially inspired to pursue a teaching career after working as a dance instructor at a ballet company in San Diego. She said she was a ballet dancer, but it can be a short-lived career and she found teaching "extremely satisfying."

Vidler still teaches Spanish in her new role. In a class she teaches, students must use conversation skills in real-world situations, such as serving as interpreters at

a tax assistance program.

One of Vidler's long-term goals for the department she chairs is to convey the impact of learning a new language.

"The student population is less diverse from where I was (in New York), and so more than ever, we need to be able to highlight the importance of the study of languages and cultures to graduate globally-aware citizens," she said.

# Hall County Court Security Detail Regularly Makes Arrests

GRAND ISLAND, Neb. (AP) — Roughly once a week someone is arrested while entering the Hall County Courthouse either because of an outstanding warrant or something in their pockets.

Sheriff Jerry Watson tells the *Grand Island Independent* he tries to have a uniformed officer on hand at the security checkpoint in case an arrest needs to be made.

Between July 1, 2013, and June 30, 2014, 89 people were arrested on warrants at the courthouse. That's up from 77 the previous year.

Many of the people who are arrested

are recognized by the people working the checkpoint through experience and by reviewing that day's schedule of hearings.

"I've been working law enforcement 26 years in this community," Watson said. "You get to know who our regular customers are."

Sometimes people forget what they have in their pockets and go through the security checkpoint with something illegal, such as drug paraphernalia or a weapon.

Watson remembers one instance where a man refused to give up his knife.

"He tried to go to the second floor because his spouse was up there," Watson said. "And we ended up wrestling with him on the steps and taking the knife away from him. He went to jail."

But that case had a sad ending because that man killed the woman a few weeks later.

In more typical cases of a pocket knife, the sheriff's office treats it much like airport security does. The knife owner is given the chance to take it back to their car if they want to keep it or forfeit it to security.

# Ranchers Opposing Public-Private Land Swap In Conata Basin

IMLAY (AP) — Ranchers in southwestern South Dakota are voicing concern over an ownership change of badlands and grasslands in a proposed swap.

The federal government and the nonprofit Nature Conservancy are the parties involved in a deal known as the Cain Creek Land Exchange. The *Rapid City Journal* reports the proposed swap seeks to straighten out some of the checkerboard pattern of public-private land ownership in the area.

Under the deal, the federal government would get rid of 26 parcels of land totaling about 3,400 acres. The parcels sit apart and isolated among private lands between Wall and Hot Springs, and U.S. Forest Service project manager Cindy Hockelberg said much of the land was abandoned by owners around the Dust Bowl in the 1930s.

The government would get back six parcels of about 2,500 acres in the Conata Basin area, along boundaries of Buffalo Gap National Grassland and Badlands National Park.

Officials from both entities also say the deal will reduce the number of public-private boundaries where the government and ranchers clash over prairie-dog management. They say wildlife would

also get more contiguous habitat, including for the endangered black-footed ferret.

But some ranchers worry the land swap would put them closer to the pesky, burrowing prairie dogs and will subtract property-tax revenues from local governments. The government maintains prairie dog populations as prey for ferrets.

"We don't need any more federal ground," rancher Martha Whitcher said. "We need to manage what we have now."

The Forest Service analyzed the tax impact of the swap, finding some municipalities would gain revenue while others would lose some, with the federal government not paying property taxes. Land that would be taken off taxes rolls is in Pennington County, particularly affecting Imlay and Scenic townships and the Wall School District.

Hockelberg said tax revenue would work out evenly in the long run with impacted municipalities being able to apply for programs such as Payments in Lieu of Taxes. But Whitcher, who's the clerk of Imlay Township, said funding from that program depends on Congress and is therefore unreliable.

Objections to the proposal can be submitted until mid-May.

# Man Buys 500-Pound Playground Rocket Ship

BY JOHN HUTHMACHER  
Hastings Tribune

HASTINGS, Neb. — A much-beloved outdoor metal rocket ship will touch down on a new frontier this week.

The 500-pound playground apparatus, which is believed to have graced Chautauqua Park (formerly Prospect Park) since the 1960s, was removed about a month ago by city officials after it was deemed unsafe for children to play on. It was purchased recently by Stephen Marian, 59, an Overland Park, Kansas, professional chauffeur whose family has long ties to Hastings.

Marian, whose family name is emblazoned on Marian Road city street signs, had been dropping hints for years to Jeff Hassenstab, parks and recreation director, that he'd be interested in purchasing the aging relic. When the decision was reached to finally remove the well-rusted piece of equipment for safety reasons, Hassenstab contacted Marian, who was all-to-happy to take it off his hands for an asking price of less than \$400.

"When I first asked Jeff if the city wanted to sell it, the answer I got at the time was no," Marian said. "I thought, 'Well, we'll just kind of keep after it a little bit.' I'd drop by notes when I'd come up to visit my aunts and uncles and see if it was still there."

A native of Lincoln who also lived in Omaha, Marian would frequent the park during visits with family members with his now grown children, Alison, 32, and Geoff, 28, who were but 5 or 6 years old at that time. His fondest memories of those visits included watching the rocket launch their imagina-

tions skyward. And that was his motivation to purchase it, he said.

"Strictly sentimental reasons," he said. "There's no logical reason for me to do it other than sentimental value. We always had picnics in that corner of the park when we came to visit, and my mom and dad were still alive."

Scarred by rust and graffiti, the rocket had simply outlived its worth as a public playground apparatus, Hassenstab said. The decision to remove it was nevertheless bittersweet, the *Hastings Tribune* reports.

"It was in rough shape," Hassenstab said. "It was rusted out, so we could no longer keep it. We're going to replace those types of equipment with things that meet the safety codes with our insurance carrier."

"We know the history behind it and that it had been in that park forever. The public was disappointed to see it go and we are too, but as a city, we can't afford the risk anymore of keeping those around."

A plan to replace all outdated and potentially dangerous equipment in the city's parks is slated to begin in May at Libs Park, Hassenstab said.

"Our goal in the near future is to try to add new full-sized playground equipment about once every three years," he said. "There are multiple things youths can do and we'll look at everything and put in new and interactive equipment that is much more safe than what we have."

Marian rented a pickup truck to haul the rocket home but learned upon arriving that it was too small for the job. He opted to take the front section home with him and will collect the rest another day.

## Girl's Friends, Nurses Plan Hospital Prom

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Hospital staff and friends turned 16-year-old Madison Hurd's room into a prom when they learned she wouldn't be able to attend the dance she helped plan at school.

Madison Hurd is being treated at Children's Hospital in Omaha for a sepsis infection, so she was going to miss Milford High School's prom on Saturday.

Madison Hurd had been looking forward to the dance, and had even worked a part-time job to pay for her dress.

"She's always been there for me when I needed it, so I wanted to be there for her," said Hurd's friend, Anna Ramsdel.

Hurd's mother, Catrece Hurd, said the nurses — some of them on their day off — did a wonderful job of helping make the Great Gatsby prom happen for her daughter this weekend.

"Absolutely overwhelming! I mean, I don't even understand it. It means the world to me. I mean, my baby's prom and she was going to miss it," Catrece Hurd said.

Madison Hurd said it's awesome that everyone did so much work to make her hospital prom happen. Her boyfriend even dressed in a tuxedo and brought her a corsage.

"Even though I'm exhausted, I'm just very happy, very happy, everything, this is better than real prom," Hurd said.

## Avera Closes SD Hospitality House

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — Avera Health has closed a hospitality house in Mitchell due to declining usage.

The house was anonymously donated to Avera Queen of Peace Foundation in 2002 and served as temporary housing for patients traveling to Mitchell to undergo same-day surgery, as well as patients receiving ongoing medical treatment and their families.

Tom Clark is president and CEO of Avera Queen of Peace. He tells The Daily Republic that the usage of the hospitality house dropped over time. Clark says the house's total annual capacity recently dropped to between 10 and 15 percent.

Avera plans to sell the house and give the proceeds to the foundation.

Clark says Avera believes local hospitality providers are better equipped to offer services like those that were provided at the house.

## Visitors Center To Close For Renovations

CHADRON, Neb. (AP) — The National Grasslands Visitors Center in South Dakota is scheduled to close for renovations.

The U.S. Forest Service says the facility in Wall, South Dakota, will close starting May 4, and could remain closed until early July. Employees will be moved to the Wall District Ranger Office, and public services will be limited to visitor information and map sales.

Renovations are planned for both the visitors' center and the Wall District Ranger Office. The renovations include an energy efficient ventilation system and windows. The building's interior will get new drywall, finishes and lighting.

The National Grasslands Visitors Center will be reroofed with new cedar shingle roofing and the existing redwood siding will be refinished to return the wood to its original natural color.

## Former Sec. Of State To Speak At SDSU

BROOKINGS (AP) — Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will visit South Dakota later this year.

Albright will speak at South Dakota State University as part of the second annual Daschle Dialogues, whose intent is to bring nationally relevant figures to the school's campus in Brookings. Albright will be joined on stage by SDSU alumnus and former U.S. Sen. Tom Daschle.

Albright became the country's first female secretary of state in 1996. She chairs the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, serves as the president of the Truman Scholarship Foundation and is a member of the U.S. Defense Department's Defense Policy Board. In 2012, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in recognition of her contributions to international peace and democracy.

Her free presentation is scheduled for Oct. 13.

# Neb. Book Artist Finds Creative Energy In The Pages

BY RICK BROWN  
Kearney Hub

KEARNEY, Neb. — Book artist Marvel Maring loved her artist books so much she took them to bed with her.

"I would take the new books that I just made and put them on my bedside table and fall asleep looking at them adoringly," she said. "They were magical. I think it's the intimacy of the object as well as the familiarity of this thing we grew up with — and engage with — everyday. To actually make one transformed everything."

Trained as a painter, Maring became disenchanted with her art after years of graduate school.

"My brain was completely fried," she said of her experiences studying art in a formal way. "I went through one of the darkest artist's blocks that seemed like it would last forever. It was hellish. It was like my brain had been split open and the contents dumped on the floor."

All that changed after Maring attended a class on creating artist books, works of art that use the form of a book or a book-like object, usually one of a kind. The results of that work can be seen as part of the "Nebraska Now" series at the Museum of Nebraska Art. Maring's show, "Nebraska Now: Marvel Maring, Artist Books," continues through June 28.

The exhibit contains artist books as well as scrolls, the *Kearney Hub* reports.

Maring's love of books extends through her current career — as a director of a branch of the Omaha Public Library system. She combines her love of traditional books with books that explore a visually creative direction.

Museum of Nebraska Art curator Teliza Rodriguez considers the "Nebraska Now" series as a way to exhibit living Nebraska artists, either in their early, mid or late careers.

"We're asking them to exemplify what the series

says, 'Nebraska Now,'" Rodriguez said. "We get well vetted work and art that people are working on, literally, two or three weeks before the show opens. I like that because it gives us a taste of what's going on in the arts in Nebraska."

Maring said she works on her artist books, the scrolls and her two-dimensional paintings at the same time.

"There are times when sewing is really meditative," she said. "That may not be the same energy I use when I'm building something. A lot of times I have everything in different stages."

Maring took inspiration from the healing scrolls found in the Coptic tradition of North Africa.

"They all feed off of each other," she said of her artistic processes. "Sometimes I want to sand (the wooden book covers) or do something very mundane or repetitive. I always try to learn something new."

Maring talked about the headband of one of her books, the piece of cloth

that creates an edge along the cover of the book.

"One thing I love about books is that there are so many references to the human body," the book artist explained. "There's the head, the tail and the spine. The physicality of the binding feels very human to me."

The first book she ever made still holds a place of honor in her home.

"It used Japanese stab binding," Maring said. "They're not very practical but they are very beautiful. The spine is exposed. It never opens flat. They are often used for ledgers or receipt books but they are not a structure that lends itself to an artist book."

That first book took Maring on a journey of creative discovery.

"It was revolutionary for me at the time," she said. "Finally I was having fun making things. It just opened things up and slowly my art started to work again."

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