

In Orbit



These acrobats were part of the entertainment provided Friday during the 68th annual El Riad Shrine Circus at Crane-Youngworth Field. A large crowd turned out for the afternoon performance, which was held before a small thunderstorm rolled through Yankton. The evening performance was marred when an aerial acrobat reportedly fell from a high wire. Local EMTs were summoned to the scene. No other information on the incident was available at press time.

KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Fourth Of July

Fire Marshal Urges Fireworks Safety

PIERRE — While there has been more rain in most of South Dakota this summer, state Fire Marshal Paul Merriman says the public still needs to be safe discharging legal fireworks this July Fourth holiday. Sale of fireworks in South Dakota is legal beginning Saturday, June 27. State law allows the purchase and discharge of fireworks from June 27 until the Sunday after July 4. This year, that means it's legal to discharge fireworks through Sunday, July 5. "We try to stress the importance of being safe and responsible with legal fireworks every year," says Merriman. "But

every year we have a few injuries and unintentional fires." Individual cities may adopt fireworks limits that are stricter than state law. Merriman recommends that citizens check local ordinances and regulations. This year is also different because rains this month have reduced the fire danger index more so than usual. But Merriman says people should still be careful with fireworks and fires. "Mishandled fireworks could start nearby vegetation or structures, including a house, on fire," he says. "People using common sense will help ensure they and

others will enjoy a safe Fourth of July celebration." Merriman offers a few simple safety tips: Follow the instructions on the product, avoid using fireworks in places where a fire could start and keep a source of water handy. Sparklers, popular with younger children, can cause painful burns and should be used with adult supervision, according to Merriman. The state Fire Marshal's Office is part of the state Department of Public Safety.

Journalist

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NNA award itself. "Obviously, as a father, I'm very proud of Jeremy receiving the award," he said. "But I'm more proud of the way he's accepted the responsibilities of being a community journalist over the years." Jeremy showed promise at an early age, Tim said. "Jeremy showed interest in journalism while in junior high, but I was cautious about encouraging but not pressuring him into this as a career," Tim said. "I'm pleased he found this path on his own and has chosen to join me at the *Courier* after his journalism education at South Dakota State University." When it comes to featuring his readers, Jeremy Waltner said he enjoys the stories on everyday people doing great things. The subjects range from the fourth-generation business owner or the 100-year-old woman who quilts to the teenage girls organizing a triathlon to raise money for a family in need. "I get a chance to report on the amazing nooks and crannies of the world," he said. Waltner runs a weekly column called the Editor's Desk, in which he uses a conversational tone to direct readers to features in that week's issue. The *Courier* has listened to its readers' preferences, Waltner said. The paper has moved away from long stories to short features on community residents doing everyday things well. A highly popular feature is the "5-minute interview," in which Waltner runs the tape recorder and then runs the interview verbatim with a photo. "We find somebody from the town who has done

something, like maybe gotten a great score on their ACT or a kid who was out last week and caught a whole bunch of fish," he said. "People absolutely love it. We run a photo with it. It's what people want. CNN hasn't done a five-minute interview with a kid in Freeman." When it comes to public affairs, newspapers need to remain vigilant as a watchdog over government, Waltner said. "Without the newspaper coverage, you're left with coffee talk and bar room talk, and we all know what that sounds like," he said. Technology has greatly changed during Waltner's career, and the *Courier* offers a daily online product as well as its weekly print version. However, the paper remains strongly committed to its print product. "I just finished an eight-month project that was a total redesign of our print edition," he said. "If I didn't believe in print, I wouldn't have put that amount of time into it." *Yankton County Observer* contributing editor Brian Hunhoff nominated Waltner for the NNA award, pointing out numerous similarities in the careers and community commitment shown by both Philips and Waltner. Waltner remains a model of consistent excellence as he has won approximately 200 awards during his *Courier* career, Hunhoff said. Recommendations were also received from Bordewyk, *Mobridge Tribune* publisher Larry Atkinson and Freeman Education and Research board president John Koch. As part of making his mark at an early age, Waltner was named SDNA Outstanding Young Journalist in 2000. At age 30, he served as the youngest president in the 60-year history of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors (ISWNE).

In addition, he has won the organization's Golden Quill award for top editorial. He also helped his father and Atkinson in organizing the 2007 ISWNE conference in the Black Hills. Waltner will ascend to the SDNA presidency in 2017. In addition, he has shared his talents by conducting SDNA photography workshops. This year, the *Courier* continued its outstanding show at the SDNA convention. The newspaper won General Excellence and Sweepstakes in its circulation category. The *Courier* also recently won "Best of Dakota" in its division, competing against both South Dakota and North Dakota newspaper at the joint convention. Waltner spoke of the excitement of winning his first SDNA award at age 18 with a third-place photo series. He plans to continue competing for awards. "But now, the real rewards come from families who tell me how much they appreciate my story or someone at a college tells me I do a good job at the newspaper," he said. Waltner said he has enjoyed building relationships and trust during the past 16 years with a wide range of community members. He remains active in his church, Schmeckfest, community theatre, community choirs, local heritage organizations and the activities of his children. In turn, community residents view him in a different way, Waltner said. "You are seen as one of them, not some guy who works at the paper. They can relate to you," he said. Jeremy has already left his mark on the *Courier*, Tim said. "We have a really good working relationship, and he's done a lot to improve

the *Courier* and take it in directions I wouldn't have pursued without his encouragement and growing leadership over the years," Tim said. Jeremy said he treasures the ability to create a legacy with his father. "As far as working with my dad, I can't even talk about it," he said. "I get emotional about it because, obviously, who doesn't want to have an amazing working relationship with your father? I get it, and I have it." Jeremy said his father taught him by example the importance of integrity, doing things to the best of your ability and not settling. The Waltners have begun the newspaper's transition to the next generation — although Jeremy jokes he might consider a National Geographic photography job for a half-million dollars a year. "Otherwise, I'm now rooted here," he said. "I have family and friends here. I'm ingrained in this community and here for the long haul." That's good news for Freeman, Koch said. Waltner provides the example of a young family man who has returned home and planted deep roots with a family, home and his media business as well as the *Courier*, he added. Waltner represents a faith in Freeman's future and brings parties together for the benefit of the entire community, Koch said. "We would willingly accept another dozen or so 'Jeremys,'" Koch said. "Fortunately, we do have this one."

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Ruling

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so in nearly 10 years as chief justice. "If you are among the many Americans — of whatever sexual orientation — who favor expanding same-sex marriage, by all means celebrate today's decision," Roberts said. "But do not celebrate the Constitution. It had nothing to do with it." Justice Antonin Scalia said he was not concerned so much about same-sex marriage as "this court's threat to American democracy." He termed the decision a "judicial putsch." Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas also dissented. Several religious organizations criticized the decision.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said it was "profoundly immoral and unjust for the government to declare that two people of the same sex can constitute a marriage." Kennedy said nothing in the court's ruling would force religions to condone, much less perform, weddings to which they object. And he said the couples seeking the right to marry should not have to wait for the political branches of government to act. The 14th Amendment to the Constitution requires states to allow same-sex couples to marry on the same basis as heterosexuals, he said. "The dynamic of our constitutional system is that individuals need not await legislative action before asserting a fundamental right. The

nation's courts are open to injured individuals who come to them to vindicate their own direct, personal stake in our basic charter," Kennedy wrote in his fourth major opinion in support of gay rights since 1996. It came on the anniversary of two of those earlier decisions. "No union is more profound than marriage," Kennedy wrote, joined by the court's four more liberal justices. The stories of the people asking for the right to marry "reveal that they seek not to denigrate marriage but rather to live their lives, or honor their spouses' memory, joined by its bond," Kennedy said. As he read his opinion, spectators in the courtroom wiped away tears when the import of the decision became clear. One of those in the audience was James Obergefell, the lead plaintiff in the

Supreme Court fight. Outside, Obergefell held up a photo of his late spouse, John Arthur, and said the ruling establishes that "our love is equal." He added, "This is for you, John." Obama placed a congratulatory phone call to Obergefell, which he took amid a throng of reporters outside the courthouse. Speaking a few minutes later at the White House, Obama praised the decision as an affirmation of the principle that "all Americans are created equal." The crowd in front of the courthouse at the top of Capitol Hill grew in the minutes following the ruling. The Gay Men's Chorus of

Washington, D.C., sang the "Star-Spangled Banner." Motorists honked their horns in support as they passed by the crowd, which included a smattering of same-sex marriage opponents. The ruling will not take effect immediately because the court gives the losing side roughly three weeks to ask for reconsideration. But county clerks in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Ohio, North Dakota, South Dakota, Tennessee and Texas began issuing licenses to same-sex couples within hours of the decision. The cases before the court involved laws from Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio

and Tennessee that define marriage as the union of a man and a woman. Those states have not allowed same-sex couples to marry within their borders, and they also have refused to recognize valid marriages from elsewhere. Just two years ago, the Supreme Court struck down part of the federal anti-gay marriage law that denied a range of government benefits to legally married same-sex couples. Justices Stephen Breyer, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor formed the majority with Kennedy on Friday, the same lineup as two years ago.

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