

# A Journey To The 'Dark' Side

Tragic Fate Of Teddy Roosevelt's Son Explored In MMC Concert Play Reading

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If you haven't heard of Kermit Roosevelt, the second son of President Theodore Roosevelt, it may not be your fault.

It was during a visit to Sagamore Hill, the historic home of the former president at Oyster Bay, N.Y., that Canadian playwright Steven Jackson noticed Kermit's absence from popular recollections of the family. Jackson has been fascinated with Theodore since his childhood and has visited several historical sites related to him.

"During this trip to Sagamore Hill, they would talk about Theodore Roosevelt's children, but they really left Kermit out," Jackson said. "I found it fascinating that they would talk about the other five but not this other one. I went searching and found an interesting story with Kermit Roosevelt, who was Teddy's second son."

That research led to the writing of "The Dark Part of the Snow," which imagines Kermit's last days in Alaska. He committed suicide June 4, 1943, with a self-inflicted gunshot wound. He was 53 years old. The cause of death would be reported as a heart attack to his mother, Edith.

A concert reading of the play will take place at 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 6, at the Bistro Second Stage located in Bede Room 127 on Mount Marty College's campus. Afterward, there will be an opportunity for discussion and to speak with the playwright. Admission to the event is free.

"Kermit very much tried to emulate his father, but there were many barriers he had to do that," Jackson said. "He had problems such as depression, and he was an alcoholic. So he had these mental health issues, but at the time people didn't talk about those things. I think his story got kind of lost. What ended up happening toward the end of his life was, he was stationed in Europe for a while and was discharged because of his depression. He came back and had horrible issues in the States."

When Kermit went missing for a week, his wife, Belle, convinced President Franklin Roosevelt, a cousin, to assist her. The president had Kermit tracked down by the FBI and then had him commissioned as a major in the United States Army. Seeking to separate him from the negative influence of friends, the president had Kermit stationed at Fort Richardson, Alaska, where he worked as an intelligence officer and helped establish a territorial militia of Eskimos and Aleuts.

Jackson said the play examines the positive and negative effects of having a larger-than-life role model like Teddy Roosevelt.

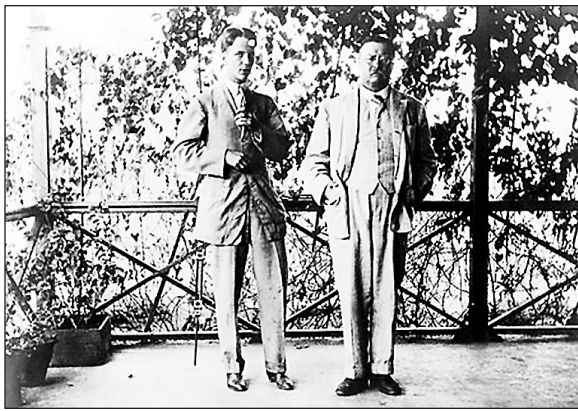
"There was so much potential for him to have his own story to tell and be proud of himself," Jackson said. "But because he seemed to want to copy his father so much in what he did, he never saw himself as doing much. I think that probably contributed a lot to his later issues. I really wanted to tell this story."

Jackson, 34, grew up in Minto, Manitoba, Canada, but now lives in Toronto, and has been involved in theatre for the better part of two decades. In 2010, a play he wrote and directed, "Brothers and Arms," played at the Fringe Festival of Toronto. In 2007, his play, "The State of Tennessee," placed second in the best new play contest at the festival.

"I've always been writing, but I never took it seriously until I wrote "The State of Tennessee," Jackson said. "It was that realization that people like what I'm doing."

A concert play reading differs from a regular performance in that there is no stage design, nor are there costumes. Instead, actors do a reading of the play.

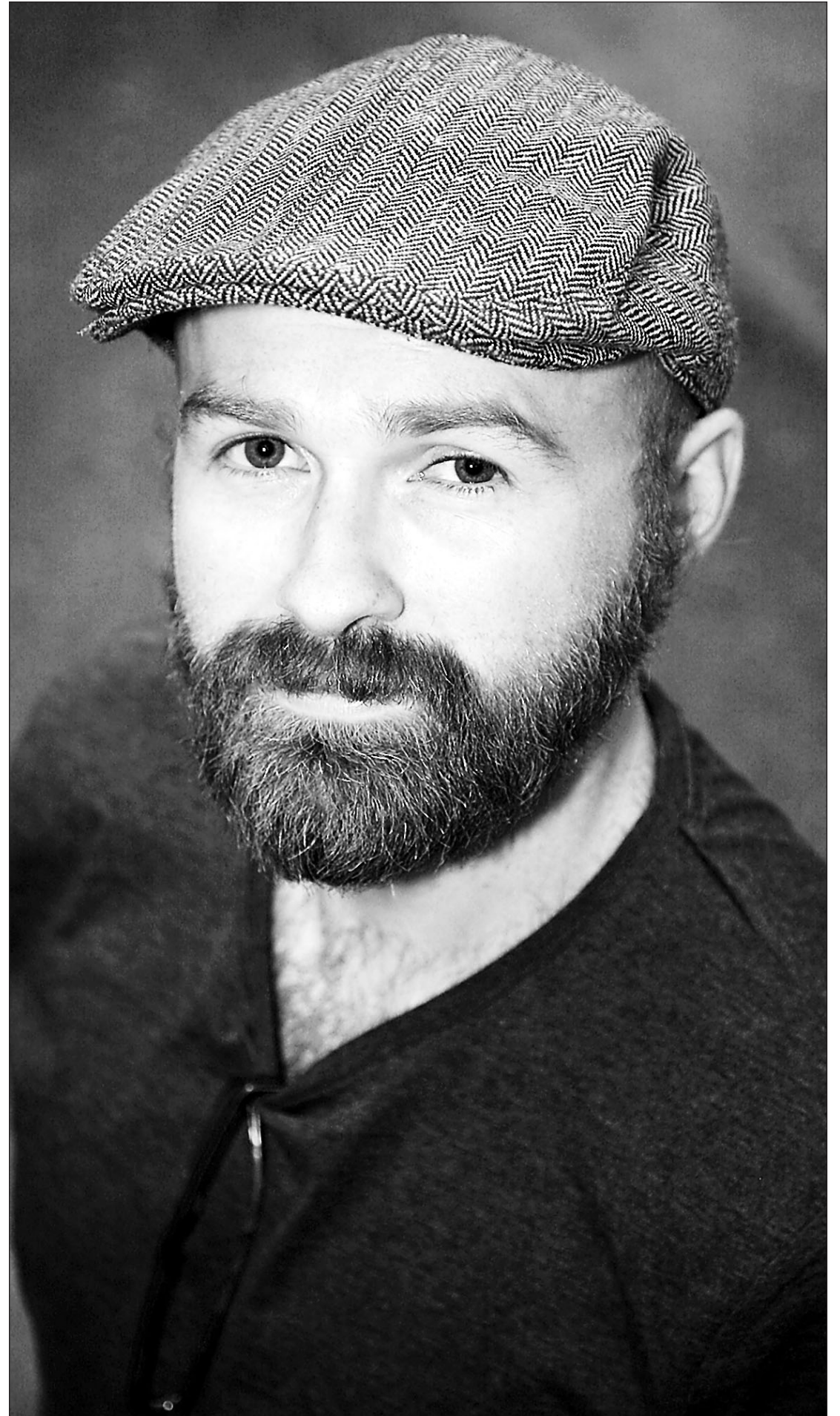
"I think with a concert reading, you get a chance to see a production in its bare bones form and hear the words without the distraction of the set and cos-



COURTESY PHOTO

The final days life of Kermit Roosevelt, left, shown here with his father Theodore, is examined in Mount Marty College's concert reading of the Steven Jackson fictional play "The Dark Part of the Snow," set for 7 p.m. Thursday on MMC's Bistro Second Stage in Bede Hall.

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COURTESY PHOTO

Canadian playwright Steven Jackson, author of "The Dark Part of the Snow," will be on hand Thursday when Mount Marty College presents a concert reading of the play. There will be a discussion afterwards featuring Jackson.

## 2011 Al Neuharth Award for Excellence in the Media

Thursday, October 6, 2011

THURSDAY  
October 6

6:15 p.m.

Doors open for general seating.

7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Award presentation and remarks by Brian Lamb.

Robert L. Slagle  
Hall Auditorium

The University of South Dakota  
Vermillion, South Dakota

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and open to the public.

To receive up to six free tickets in advance, write to jharris@freedomforum.org or call 605/677-6060 before Oct. 3.

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### Join us for a special evening

with C-SPAN founder, chairman and chief executive officer **Brian Lamb** as he reflects on his groundbreaking career.



Brian Lamb

In the 1970s, Lamb was Washington bureau chief for *Cablevision* magazine and began publishing his own biweekly newsletter called *The Media Report*. Inspired by his work in the fields of broadcasting and journalism, he crafted a vision of a national

public affairs network that would offer viewers across the country gavel-to-gavel coverage of the U.S. Congress. That channel, C-SPAN, debuted in 1979 and has since expanded to include three networks, a radio station and a diverse web presence.

Lamb is this year's recipient of the Al Neuharth Award for Excellence in the Media, which honors lifetime achievement in the media. The award is named for *USA Today* and Freedom Forum founder Al Neuharth, a South Dakota native and 1950 graduate of USD.

## Missouri Valley Model Railroad Club Hosts Train Meet This Weekend

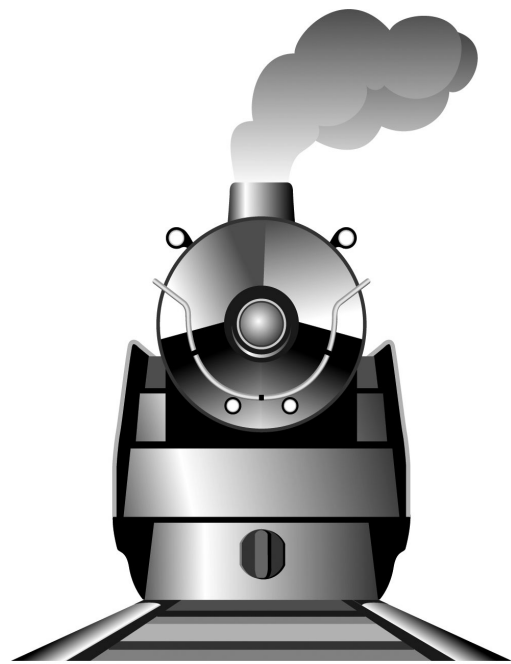
A train meet featuring model railroading is planned for the Yankton County 4-H Grounds Oct. 1-2, announced Francis Serr, president of the Missouri Valley Model Railroad Club.

The meet runs from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and continues 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday. The 4-H Grounds are located on Yankton's east side at 901 Whiting Drive.

The event will feature an operating "O" (1/4-inch per foot) gauge model railroad operation set up on a portable layout from Sioux Falls featuring Lionel and Williams electric trains, as well as others. This layout can operate three trains on continuous running at the same time. This layout also features a display of buildings and scenery, which makes for a fascinating demonstration of model railroad scenery and operation.

Another feature will be a large doll house prepared by Sue Schroeder of Tyndall. In this doll house is a furnished living room with a miniature train running around the base of it. Look outside and the same train is now full size making its journey through the surrounding countryside. All of this is done in "Z" scale of approximately 1/16 of an inch (1:220) to the foot.

A "HO" gauge layout of Don Hopf's will feature automated actions by accessories such as a water tank with a lowering spout and locomotives with full sound effects and operating couplers. HO gauge is 3/12 millimeters to the foot (1:87), and is the most popular size in model railroading. There will also be an operating "N" gauge scale layout with trains and scenery. "N" gauge (1:148) is approximately half the size of "HO" while "HO" is half the size of "O" gauge (1/4 inch to the foot). Larger scales do exist such as "G" scale (close to 1 inch



equaling one foot) for operations such as garden or outdoor model railroads.

Dealers from Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota will be on hand with their products. Model trains, scenery and railroad memorabilia will be available for train collectors as well as others.

Admission ticket stubs will be used for a train set drawing at the end of each day. You need not be present to win. Lunch is also available on site.