



Community

Huron man named Volunteer of the Year by Miss S.D. Foundation.

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The Daily PLAINSMAN

SEW IT GROW IT
Huron, SD
Sept. 3-7, 2015

Local author

to appear at the State Fair

BY PLAINSMAN STAFF
HURON — Richard Skorupski of Frankfort has been chosen to participate in an exhibit of the “Arts at the State Fair” this year at the South Dakota State Fair.
Richard is the author of three novels portraying the positive virtues of rural South Dakota living. “Flyover Country” was his first in 2012, followed by “The Fred Weber Story, A Flyover Country Novel” and then “Tom and Sarah: The Beginning,” this past summer.
Skorupski will present his books in the State Fair Arts Building from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 5. He will discuss his books, his reasons for writing them and the stories soon to follow. He will be happy to answer questions about writing and self publishing.
Skorupski moved to South Dakota with his wife, Cheryl, in 2004. He was so impressed with

Commission passes ordinance to allow Sunday liquor

BY ROGER LARSEN
OF THE PLAINSMAN
HURON — Sales of liquor on Sundays becomes legal in Huron near the end of September, after the City Commission supported a request made by local bar owners and retailers to align the ordinance with state law.
After they explained their reasons for their support or opposition, the commission voted 4-1 to approve the change.

It takes effect 20 days after publication of the ordinance in the newspaper.
Mayor Paul Aylward said while the issue is not a new one in Huron, it still generated many calls and emails in the week since first reading was approved and publicized.
State law allows cities to be more restrictive with Sunday sales of on- and off-sale liquor. Most major South Dakota cities allow it. It’s also permitted in smaller towns in Beadle County.

Commissioner Doug Kludt said most of the callers he heard from oppose Sunday sales.
He said it’s a personal freedom issue and, as a lawyer, believes Huron’s prohibition may be unconstitutional.
In his two and a half years on the commission, Gary Harrington said he has never had such a response to any of the heady issues the board has considered.
He said he would like to get all city

ordinances in 1
Retailers and bars
on Sundays and c
will not force the
He attributes t
drunk driving an
police officers in s
ers. He also said
Huron for events
COMMISS

The Merci Train of Gratitude

BY LOUISE VAN POLL
FOR THE PLAINSMAN
HURON — Huron is fortunate to have South Dakota’s French Merci boxcar in town. And what better place than on the State Fairgrounds where thousands of visitors are able to visit it annually?
But this was not the original destination for the Merci Traincar and Huron had a little help from the weather in landing this beautiful symbol of friendship and gratitude as its resting place.
The story of the rail cars actually begins in 1947, after the end of World War II.
During the war, the German army had pillaged and ransacked France. Most of the food was used to feed the occupation forces. Machinery and equipment was sent back to Germany for the war effort. Anything of value was looted by the invading army.
By the time German forces



This Merci Train boxcar arrived in Huron in 1949, bearing gifts of thanks from the people of France for the role that the United States played in the outcome of World War II.

AUTHOR - Page 3

MERCI - Page 3

On of state’s richest men claims he is insolvent

STIOUX FALLS (AP) — A man believed to be one of the wealthiest in South Dakota says he is insolvent.
Tom Vucurevich, of Rapid City, heir to the late banking magnate and philanthropist John T. Vucurevich, has notified creditors including the City of Sioux Falls that he and his wife, Claudia, do not have the money to pay debts, the Argus Leader newspaper reports.
“Taking into account the liabilities and claims against Mr. and Mrs. Vucurevich, together with the assets that Mr Dell and I have been able to identify and reasonably value, Mr. and Mrs. Vucurevich are insolvent,” said the report compiled by Michael Dell, an accountant

for Vucurevich, and independent economist Donald Frankenfeld.
Vucurevich referred questions to his attorney, Mark O’Leary, who said he doesn’t publicly discuss matters related to his clients.
About 20 creditors have claims of more than \$11 million. The claims were generated when Vucurevich struck deals with some of the former lenders and business partners of his son, Kent Vucurevich, who declared bankruptcy in 2011.
The city of Sioux Falls is suing to recoup \$279,000 in utility costs from a housing development. Assistant City Attorney Diane Best declined comment.

Same mountain, new name

JOSH LEDERMAN
MARK THIESSEN
ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obama administration will change the name of North America’s tallest mountain peak from Mount McKinley to Denali, the White House said, a major symbolic gesture to Alaska Natives on the eve of President Barack Obama’s historic visit to Alaska.
By renaming the peak Denali, an Athabaskan word meaning “the high one,” Obama waded into a sensitive and decades-old conflict between residents of Alaska and Ohio.
Alaskans have informally called the mountain Denali for years, but the federal government recognizes its name invoking the 25th president,

born in Ohio and assassinated early in his second term.
The White House said the renaming is part of an effort to improve relations with Native Alaskans.
Julie Kitka, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives, said in an interview Sunday that the new policy announcement would have a concrete as well as psychological effect on Alaska Natives. “It’s symbolic,” Kitka said.
McKinley was an Ohio native, elected president in 1896, who never set foot in Alaska.
“With our own sense of reverence for this place, we are officially renaming the mountain Denali in recognition of the traditions of Alaska Natives and the strong support of the people of Alaska,” said Interior Secretary Sally Jewell.

Red boy strict reco fron buri

KELDA J. AMERICAN
REDFIELD
Redfield strides in his astating but Tyler Scott ing hurdles being badly Tyler w and his br friend’s h trying to u sticks.
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arrested for driving under the
influence, drove her car into a
clothing store.

DR: From Page 1

the state he started writing
about it. He created the imag-
inary town of Helen, S.D., and
is building stories about the
people living in and around
that small town.

The author's wife is the
cover artist for all of his nov-
els and a sample of her work
will also be on display.

During the time on
Saturday, all copies of
Skorupski's books purchased
at the fair will be signed by
the author.

CLAIM:

From Page 1
Some creditors are hoping for
a better resolution.

"Tom is a great man," said
Jason Appel, executive vice
president at Plains Commerce
Bank, which has the largest
claim, \$4.7 million. "He has said
he is going to sort his way
through this."

John T. Vucurevich built a
banking empire before dying in
2005. A foundation in his name
distributes about \$5 million
annually to charities, universi-
ties and nonprofits.

MERCI:

were finally driven out of
France, they took everything
they could carry and tried to
destroy what they couldn't. The
French survivors had nothing
left and were dependent on for-
eign aid.

Drew Pearson, a newspaper
columnist and radio commenta-
tor, in response to a letter to the
editor, began a food drive for
the people of France. The
response far exceeded his
wildest hopes.

Hawaii, which was not even
a state, donated two box cars
full of sugar. Texas supplied 29
rail cars full of supplies. A 22-
year-old student in Alabama
collected donations from class-
mates to contribute 7,200
pounds of food to the
Friendship Train, as it had been
dubbed.

When the grass-roots effort
was completed two months
later, more than 700 freight cars
filled with supplies were
shipped to France. The value at
that time was \$40 million.

Supplies continued to pour
into New York for months and
were sent to 14 European
nations in all.

At the Merci Train reception
in Huron, the French consul to
the city of Chicago explained to
the crowd how deeply touched
the French people were with the
Friendship Train, saying, "This
train meant so much, particu-
larly for the children of France,
some of whom for the first time
in their lives were able to taste
cake and chocolate and have a
little bit of extra sugar."

In France, a railway worker
and Army veteran, Andre
Picard, came up with the idea of
sending a Merci or Thank You
boxcar full of gifts to the people

ing community support.

A TIF could be a way for

the city to develop areas such

as the South Town Addition

south of Coborn's.

As Monday's meeting

began, Aylward showed a

photo on the commission room

screen of sacks of garbage.

A resident sent the photo to

the mayor, explaining that it

was garbage she had picked up

during her walks. She chal-

lenged the mayor to have other

residents also pick up garbage

before the State Fair opens on

Thursday.

Aylward announced that

challenge to the public and

urged people to clean up for

the thousands of visitors com-

ing to Huron.

"If we all do a little bit, no

Monday in observance of the

Labor Day holiday.

City offices will be closed

on Monday.

The solid waste department

rubble site will be closed this

Saturday and on Labor Day.

The Monday garbage, recy-

cling and grass collection

routes will be done on

Wednesday, Sept. 9. Residents

are reminded to have their con-

tainers at the regular collection

points the night before as the

drivers will not be rerouted.

Morning fire destroys Watertown sales barn

WATERTOWN (AP)—An
early morning fire destroyed a
sale barn at South Dakota's
Livestock Sales in Watertown.

The blaze started about
1:30 a.m. Monday. Assistant
Fire Chief Don Rowland says
the cause wasn't immediately
determined.

No people were injured,
and no animals were in the
barn when it burned. State
Highway 20 was shut down
for a few hours while fire-
fighters battled the blaze.

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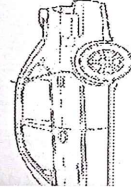
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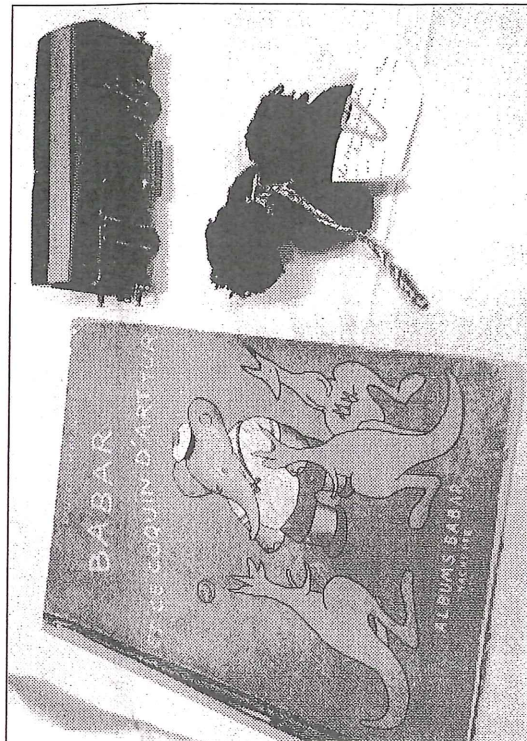
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eptember 4 - 1:00 pm

e will be closed on

September 7, 2015.

a safe holiday!



LOUISE VAN POLL/PLAINSMAN

These items, part of the gifts from France on the gratitude train, were auctioned off in Huron in February 1949 and were donated to the Dakotaland Museum this past summer by Cherie Thompson Egger.

of America. In all, 49 boxcars
were sent to America in 1949,
one for each state plus one for
Washington D.C. and the terri-
tory of Hawaii to share.

Because thousands of World
War I veterans were still living,
it was decided to use the nearly
antique boxcars that soldiers
from both world wars would
recognize. The 40 and 8 cars
were so named because they
could hold either 40 men or
eight horses for transport to the
front lines.

All the gifts were precious or
had special significance to the
people who donated them. The
items, more than 52,000,
included 49 dolls from fashion
designers, soil and trees, a pair
of worn wooden shoes, a jew-
eled Legion of Honor medal, 49
wedding dresses, books, works
of art, clocks, and many, many
toys from the children.

One stuffed dog was donated
by 10-year-old Helen Petit, who
included the following note:

"I am sending you one of my
preferred children, my big
LouLou. It seems that I was one
year old when Meme offered it
to me for my father who was a
prisoner of war in Germany. I
love my LouLou very much, but
I offer it to you in gratitude for
all the Americans have done for
my country and also because
the dog represents fidelity. I
thought that I would keep it all
my life, so it is with sorrow that
I embrace LouLou for the last
time. You will take good care of
him and speak to him some-
times of his little French mis-
tress. I am also sending you a
picture of myself so that you
can see me and show me to my
LouLou. I know that you will
take my place near him.
Without knowing you, I love

From Page 1

you and embrace you with all
my heart."

South Dakota's Gov. George
Mikelson had appointed a
Merci Train committee and by
Feb. 10, 1949, was ready to
welcome the Thank You train at
Pierre. But it was a brutal win-
ter that year all across the plains
with blizzards, sub-zero tem-
peratures and blowing gales.
Travel into Pierre was impossi-
ble.

The Feb. 10 edition of the
Huron Plainsman reported that
Pierre was buried in snow and
that the governor had decided to
officially welcome the Merci
Car in Huron on Feb. 15, the
day after the train's arrival in
Huron. Huron had escaped the
worst of the region's snowfall
and was more accessible to
folks traveling from other cities.

According to the same
Plainsman article, the largest
and most expensive items in the
boxcar would be distributed to
the State and Custer Museums.
The nine Voitures of the
American Legion 40 et 8 in
South Dakota auctioned off the
other items to raise money for a
whirlpool bath for polio vic-
tims.

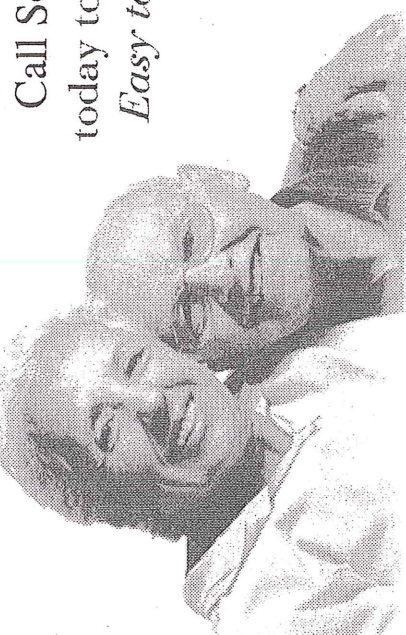
This summer the Dakotaland
Museum received a few arti-
facts from the South Dakota
boxcar. They are a "Babar the
Elephant" book in its original
French and a French poodle,
made of yarn, both purchased at
the 1949 auction by Donald
Thompson, a World War II vet,
and a toy replica boxcar pur-
chased by Charles Horine, a
World War I veteran, both of
Huron. The replica boxcar had
been on display at Huron's
American Legion Post for sev-
eral years.

On his Web site, Earl R.
Bennet, who made several jour-
neys to visit all 49 boxcars,
wrote, "The Merci Train played
an important, but little known
role in the historical friendship
that has existed between our
two nations since before
America gained its independ-
ence. In fact, the French people
fought with us to achieve that
status and also gave us another
gift which has become an
important symbol of America's
freedom around the world: The
Statue of Liberty."

So take a moment to stop by
the old boxcar on the
Fairgrounds during the State
Fair and then visit the
Dakotaland Museum to see
these artifacts from the Merci
Train on display.

*Louise Van Poll is a colum-
nist and freelance writer for the
Plainsman.*

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