



Jeff Hayne shows a group of Volga second-graders how he gets in and out of his car. Hayne was paralyzed from the waist down in a car accident last June. He volunteers to speak to various groups, answering questions about day-to-day life in a wheelchair, as well as those about "wheelchair etiquette."

## South Dakota gaining more exposure in film world

BY JENNIFER SANDERSON  
Argus Leader

Filmmaker Steve Balderson had the star, the script and the crew. All that was missing was the site.

The writer, director and co-producer of "Firecracker" – starring Dennis Hopper, Karen Black and Blondie's Deborah Harry – Balderson needed a location that would seamlessly blend with the main footage to be shot in his hometown of Wamego, Kan. The town of fewer than 4,000 residents lies 45 miles northwest of Topeka.

"I had this perfect picture in my mind," says Balderson, whose film "Pep Squad" premiered a few years ago at the Cannes Film Festival.

"I saw this stand of straight, thin trees – birch or aspen, maybe – and I needed to find it" he says. Then, at the risk of spoiling the story, he adds: "It's the climax of the film, where Dennis chases Debbie Harry's character. I needed that shot."

Balderson wouldn't find it in the greater Wamego area. Nearly 600 miles away, in Pierre, Chris Hull knew exactly where such a place existed in the Black Hills.

Balderson will be going there later this spring, with cast and crew in tow.

Hull, who works in the state tourism department's film commission office, matches directors with South Dakota locations through photos, site visits and Internet postings.

The film commission has attracted major studios to the state in the past decade with releases such as "Dances With Wolves," "Armageddon" and "Thunderheart." In recent years, South Dakota also has seen a rise in independent filmmakers who choose to set their stories against the land of infinite variety.

The South Dakota Film Commission, a division of the state tourism board, doesn't track specific dollar amounts, but sweeping, Western shoots such as "Wyatt Earp" and "Son of the Morning Star" bring in large crews – all of whom spend money to sleep, eat and shop.

Filming in South Dakota was an easy choice for Bridget Bedard, who graduated from Vermillion High School before attending New York University's film school. Her final project, a 21-minute film titled "Baby," shot footage in the Vermillion area during a two-week stint in the summer of 1999.

Family and friends made up the crew, neighbors' homes played host to the cast, and Bedard's mother provided the craft services – feeding the entourage three squares a day.

"The script was written and set in South Dakota, and there's nowhere else that looks like South Dakota," Bedard says.

The story follows a prom queen as she gives birth at a rest stop, then tries to escape her motherly duties.

John Hansen, a Sioux Falls independent medical examiner and occupational medicine physician, spent nearly \$25,000 to create his first film.

The short "Faust/The Lost Feminine" is a retelling of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's "Faust: A Tragedy." It's the story of a man who barbers his soul to the devil in exchange for earthly pleasures.

See **FILMS**, page 5F

# 'Different is good'

BY JENNIFER SANDERSON  
Argus Leader

**V**OLGA – Jeff Hayne didn't know what to expect, but it isn't this.

Nearly 40 second-graders crowd around his car, waiting for him to open the door to the Chrysler Sebring coupe.

One student takes in Hayne's nearly platinum hair, blue eyes and fitted turtleneck sweater, then leans toward a classmate and, in a voice breathless with awe, whispers: "Is he a Backstreet Boy?"

Hayne, 21, reaches into the back seat and grabs his custom-made, folding wheelchair with one hand. He places the chair on the pavement and locks its wheels to keep it from rolling away.

The questions start before he can hoist himself into the seat:

"Can you play basketball?" ("Dribbling is kind of tricky," he says, "but the main difference is there's a lot less dunking.")

"Can you feel your legs?" (Nothing below the waist.)

"Do you have a girlfriend?" (Silence, then a grin.)

Hayne is happy to answer all the questions, but first, teacher Vicky Linneman herds the pupils into her classroom. Ignoring the sidewalk's gentle dip to the parking lot on the passenger side of his car, Hayne pops a wheelie, jumps the curb and follows them inside Volga's Sioux Valley Schools.

The school's buildings have changed since he ruled the halls as homecoming king, and so has he.

Paralyzed in a car accident last June, he has spent the past months learning that change isn't a bad thing – even when it isn't planned.

In February, Hayne, a drama student, became the first person in a wheelchair to act onstage in a South Dakota State University production. He graduates this spring – he missed only three weeks of classes during recovery – and in August, he'll move to Los Angeles to pursue a career in show business.

In the meantime, he speaks with area groups

## Paralyzing crash introduces Brookings man to world of changes, abilities he didn't know he had

STORY BY  
JENNIFER SANDERSON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
KEN KLOTZBACH



Jeff Hayne takes his dog, Grace, for a walk.

about his experiences and works at a Brookings radio station. He gets scolded by fiancée Kathleen O'Donnell for tracking mud across the carpet with his all-terrain tires.

Hayne gives their 8-month-old Pomeranian, Grace, workouts as she runs and he rolls. He plays on his "toys," a specially designed, low-riding bicycle whose gears turn by armpower, and the Stand-Aid, which allows him to brace himself upright to improve circulation in his legs and reduce muscle spasticity. He maps out training schedules to prepare for the next Paralympic Games tryouts, and he plans for all the other things that people starting out on their own worry about.

There's little time, and even less desire, to feel sorry for himself.

"When you get up and look at yourself in the mirror, you should be glad to see yourself," Hayne told the Volga, Bruce and Sinai second-graders.

"Sometimes people who get hurt in accidents don't do that right away," he said. "But you should say, 'I'm proud of who I am. Different is good.' If everybody was the same, how would you know who you are?"

It's never been a question for Hayne, O'Donnell says.

While he sometimes has bad days, those low spots never extend to weeks or months. The life-changing accident has strengthened them both, O'Donnell says.

"We have a really special bond, and while we're maybe not the norm, we get to experience so many things that not everybody does," says O'Donnell, 23. "I'm lucky in the fact that I've found somebody I know I can be with, no matter what."

### Crushed vertebra

Hayne's determination, O'Donnell's support, family and a cast of skilled surgeons and therapists sped his recovery.

In Sioux Falls, Hayne underwent surgery to repair his eighth vertebra, which was crushed

See **PARALYZED**, page 3F

## All-State musicians live up to their billing

If it's true, as recent studies say, that piano lessons and other musical expressions can raise test scores for students, the kids who were in Pierre a couple of weeks ago for All-State Band should have top-notch classroom marks, indeed.

They certainly have mastered the art of making music.

I'm not talking about the formal concert the musicians performed on the last evening of their time in Pierre. I had another engagement and missed that event. I'm told it was simply excellent.

I didn't miss the young musicians completely, though. They were in town for three days, and on the Friday evening before their concert, I was fortunate enough to sit in on a bit of their practice session in the

Riggs High School gymnasium. What I heard was incredible.

These kids have a ton of talent, that was easy to hear. They also must have some pretty competent teachers. Someone has to focus and direct all of that talent, if to do nothing more than introduce the young musicians to certain pieces of music or to demonstrate techniques that help them maximize their ability. Even Tiger Woods, I'm told, had to learn the basics of the golf swing.

I met a few of the band instructors who helped bring those all-state kids along. From what I could tell, the teachers could pass the music along to the students because they had it in them, too.

Because Pierre hosted the all-state group this year, Larry Johnson, the band director at

Riggs, was instrumental – get it? – in organizing the event. Larry also is the director of a local big band.

He plays string bass in a jazz trio and with a church choir, and for a lot of years he played and sang bass in several dance bands, including the Standbys, the only band in the world that ever let me be a lead singer.

The big band, though, is why I got to meet some of the visiting band masters. Over Forte is the name of the local big band, and as long as I promise not to sing, the members let me play rhythm guitar.

Larry wanted to give his col-



TERRY WOSTER  
Prairie Life

leagues something to do on the Friday evening when the kids were in final rehearsals, so he arranged for the big band to set up in the high-school band room, just up the stairs from the gym. We'd play for a couple of hours, and the visiting band teachers could sit in, listen in or tune out.

The visitors did all those things. Some sat and listened, others took a horn for a couple of tunes, and several shucked their jackets, pulled music stands close and jammed the evening away. The room was full of trumpet players, trombone players and saxophone players, but it took about 45 minutes before a guy named Gary from Washington High agreed to try my guitar. I hung around a while in case he ran into trouble, but he seemed to

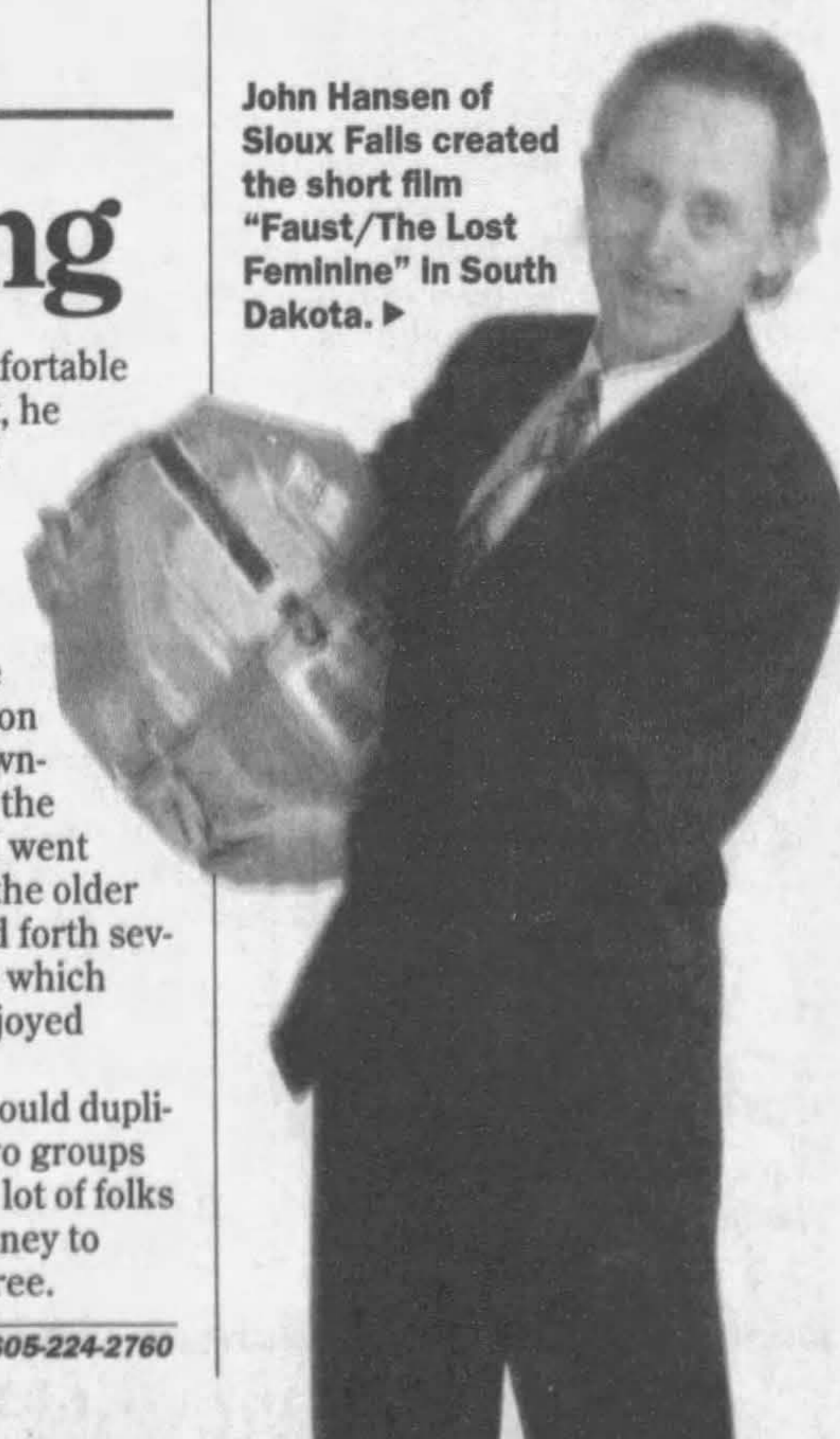
be pretty darned comfortable with the thing. In fact, he played some chords I didn't know were in that guitar, and I've been playing it for most of 20 years.

When I saw that he was going to make it on his own, I slipped downstairs and listened to the young people. Then I went back and listened to the older folks. I went back and forth several times. I can't say which band was better. I enjoyed both.

I know this. If we could duplicate the music the two groups made that evening, a lot of folks would pay a lot of money to hear it. And I got in free.

Reach Terry Woster at 605-224-2760 or twoster@midco.net

John Hansen of Sioux Falls created the short film "Faust/The Lost Feminine" in South Dakota. ▶





*'He's always had a love of eagles, since he was a little boy. I told him, "An eagle doesn't run on the ground; an eagle soars. And that's what you're going to do. You're going to soar."'*

—Brenda Hayne, Jeff's mother

## Paralyzed: Crash went undiscovered for 18 hours

Continued from 1F

in the accident.

During an 11-hour operation, doctors implanted a steel Herrington rod to make the spine rigid, allowing Hayne to sit upright on his own. They scheduled the procedure for July Fourth, Independence Day. A broken right shoulder required additional surgery.

Hayne then spent three weeks at the Craig Hospital in Denver, which exclusively treats patients with spinal cord injuries. The average stay is three months.

"We realized that Jeff's injuries were minor compared to what a lot of people there were going through," says his mother, Brenda Hayne of Volga. "I think some of the kids (at Craig) were wondering why he was even there. He had no head trauma or internal-organ injuries, and he was in really good health — he's a weightlifter — before the accident."

Nancy Wheeler, an SDSU assistant theatre and communication studies professor, believes fate played a part.

"He was still here when this happened," she says. "He's close to home, with his older brother and parents in Volga, and his friends in Brookings. After getting to this point, he knows he can do anything."

The journey hasn't been easy, although Hayne downplays the challenges. It's no good to think about what might have been, he says.

### A long wait

The night of the accident, Hayne was fresh from a fishing trip with a close friend, driving his Jeep back toward Brookings.

His friend followed in a separate vehicle. But on a gravel road, dust can hang in the air for a half-mile, and when Hayne went over an embankment and into a reed-filled field, his friend didn't see him.

"It was about 6 p.m., and I remember driving and looking up at the sun," Hayne says. "And then that's all until I woke up outside, in a big mud puddle. I couldn't have been out long because the sun was in pretty much the same position in the sky."

Hayne tried to use his legs to push himself up, out of the water. Nothing. He'd been wearing shorts and shoes, but the shoes had flown from his feet during the time he can't remember. Only then did he allow himself the luxury of getting scared.

"I thought, 'What in the hell was that?'" Hayne says. "But not long afterward, I calmed down. I wasn't scared anymore. I know I wasn't in shock because I was totally rational."

He reasoned someone would come by soon and find him. He tossed clumps of mud and fistfuls of reeds into the air to attract attention. He'd be taken to the hospital, and someone else would call his parents, he thought. Everything would be all right, if he could just wait this thing out.

But the embankment and the reeds interrupted the view from the road. He and the wrecked SUV wouldn't be discovered until noon the next day, when a farmer passed by and noticed the sunlight glinting off metal.

At first, O'Donnell thought she'd been stood up. An SDSU graduate, she'd gotten off work at the radio station at 8 p.m., and she'd expected Hayne to be back from his fishing trip by then.

"We lived in the same apartment building, and there wasn't a time when Jeff didn't know where I was and vice versa," she says. "Around midnight, I'm thinking, 'He went out without me.'"

An hour later, concern replaced O'Donnell's anger. She called friends, family — everyone she could think of — until 3 a.m. the next morning, then slept for three hours before starting all over again.

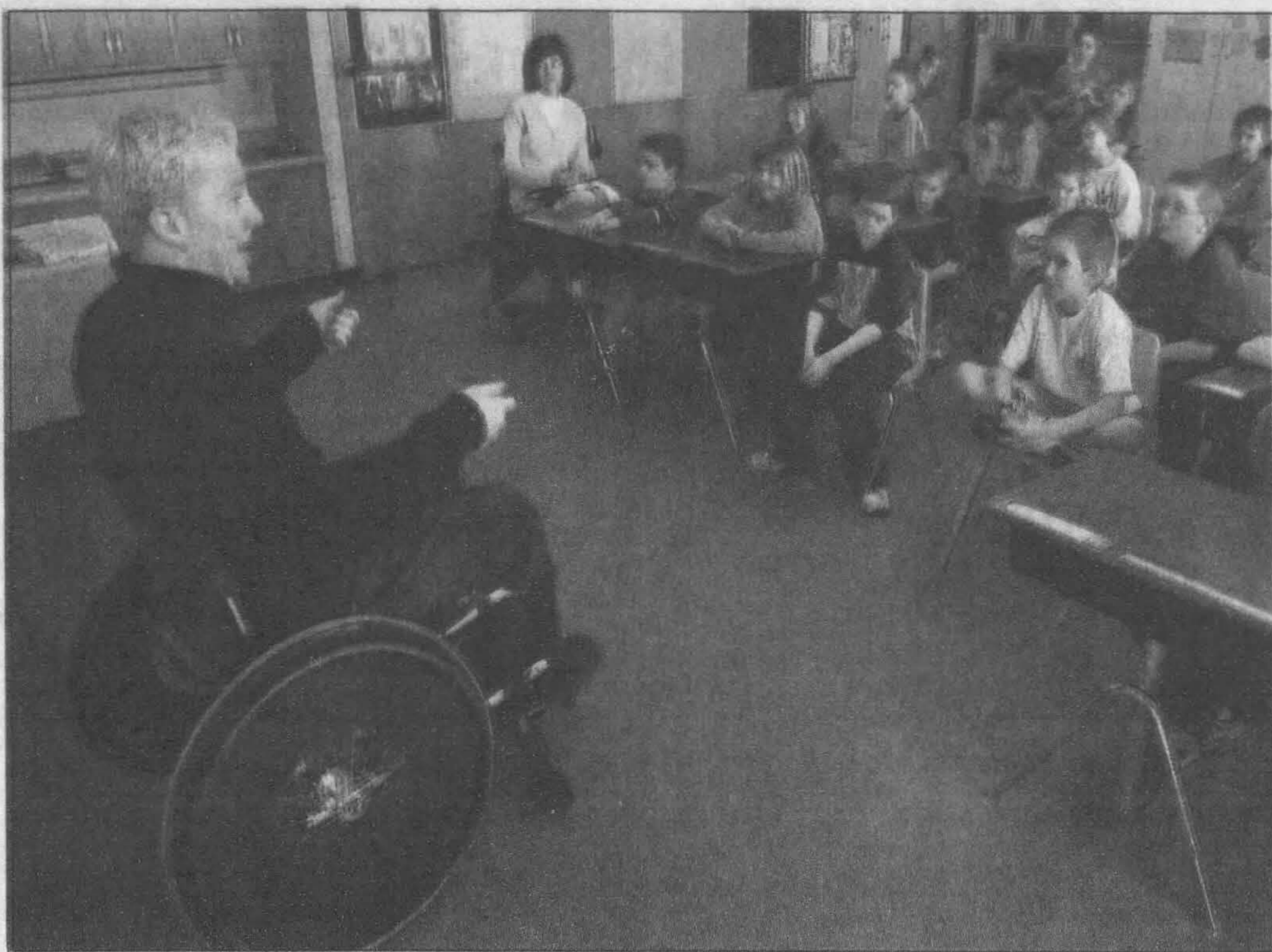
She phoned Hayne's fishing buddy, and the two retraced the road from the lake to Brookings.

"We drove right by him and we didn't see him," she says. "It was the strangest thing."

Later, Hayne would tell her that he thought he'd heard her car, a 1986 Ford Tempo that needed some muffler work.

In the early morning, the cars stopped passing at 1 a.m., about the time O'Donnell began making phone calls. For some reason, she didn't think to call Hayne's fishing buddy until hours later.

"They were both having a good time, and they had different plans," O'Donnell says. "Of course no one expected him to be able to know what had happened



Jeff Hayne talks with a group of Volga second-graders about what it's like to become a paraplegic.

### Learning opportunity

Jeff Hayne, whose spinal cord was severed in a car accident last summer, volunteers his time to speak with community groups about his experiences. He also shares his time with elementary-through college-aged students. He emphasizes personal goals and self-esteem in any situation.

Hayne answers questions about day-to-day life in a wheelchair, as well as those about "wheelchair etiquette" — how to treat those who use wheelchairs to get around. People who are interested in inviting Hayne to speak at their organization or school may call him at 696-9844.

to Jeff."

If someone had found Hayne immediately after the accident, doctors say the outcome would be no different. His shoulder still would have been broken, his eighth vertebrae still would have been crushed and his spinal cord still would have been neatly severed.

What Hayne would have gone without is the night spent alone, listening to cars approach, then drive away.

He wouldn't have heard a bird's sunset song or seen the stars that night, or the two young raccoons who waddled their way up to him while he lay, waiting, in a pool of mud. He wouldn't have been visited by the tabby kitten who bathed, seated on his numb legs, just after sunrise.

"I was alone in a very natural word, but I felt like there was someone there," he says. "I thought, 'These are the most beautiful stars I've ever seen.' You'd think it would be a horrible memory, but it's not. It was unbelievable, and I wouldn't trade it."

The night wasn't without its struggles. Hayne couldn't reposition himself in the puddle, and he had to hold his head steady to keep the water out of his eyes, nose and mouth. When he tired and let his neck muscles slacken, his breaths sucked in murky water. He spit it out, then concentrated again on keeping his neck tight.

"A voice in my head said to keep going," he says. "I decided my life was worth more than an accident on a random afternoon."

That thought strengthened him while he waited for help to come. He used the time to prepare himself for what would come next.

He lay hidden, covered in mud, the whites of his eyes the only bit of contrast the paramedics would see when they arrived 18 hours after the accident. "Glad you could make it," he told them.

"We'd looked everywhere," O'Donnell says. "And then around noon, Jeff's dad, Jack, called to say the police had found him."

O'Donnell rushed to the hospital, unsure of what she'd see. It's noon now, she thought, and he's been missing since last night. She found Hayne awake, alert and begging someone to scratch his head.

"I'll never forget," O'Donnell says. "He has this blond, blond hair, and it was just caked with mud. It was starting to dry and it itched horribly. He'd been through all this, and he was worried about his head itching."

The ambulance took Hayne to Sioux Falls, where neurosurgeon Dr. Daniel Tynan would try to sal-

vage Hayne's backbone. Tynan also would be the one to tell Hayne that even with today's technology, walking would be impossible.

"You just hope that somehow the X-rays are wrong," Brenda Hayne says. "My husband, Jack, went in and told Jeff."

Hayne remembers answering, "Oh, well, I know." His father remembers Hayne adding, "But I'm really going to miss dancing."

### An uplifting visit

A week after surgery, Hayne received an unexpected visitor who delivered a wake-up call. Laura McGreevy, who soon would be crowned Miss Wheelchair South Dakota, rolled into the room.

A state high school gymnastics champion before a training accident left her a paraplegic, McGreevy also is O'Donnell's best friend from O'Gorman High School in Sioux Falls. Hayne hadn't known McGreevy any other way than in a wheelchair.

"I was really bummed out. I said, 'This isn't me. I dance. I'm a performer. I can't do this,'" Hayne says. "And Laura rolled into the room, hopped up on the bed and crossed her legs, using her hands. She shifted around."

Hayne realized McGreevy was giving a demonstration of all the things she could do and all the things he could do if he worked hard.

"I saw her and I thought, 'This isn't even going to slow me down,'" Hayne says.

He and O'Donnell, along with his parents, received an outpouring of community help. Still, O'Donnell says, people tend to see the wheelchair first.

"You get looks, but they aren't hurtful," she says. "They were, a little, in the beginning. Jeff was used to being the good-looking guy that everybody looks up to, and now he's at a different level. Now it's up to him to show his other gifts."

O'Donnell knows the thought process: First, strangers wonder what happened to Hayne. Close behind that for many people, she says, is the realization that she's not in a wheelchair and they're very much together.

"People tell me, 'You're making it work. You stuck it out,'" she says. "I can't imagine it any other way. If he was hurt, what else would I do? I've never had a question in my mind."

It's what you do for a best friend, Brenda Hayne says. O'Donnell told her during her son's early rehabilitation.

"A lot of girls of lesser ... well, a lot of lesser girls would've walked away," Brenda Hayne says. "He gave her the diamond in October, and she said yes."

O'Donnell stayed. She helped Hayne get dressed when his misaligned shoulder refused to heal properly, and after another surgery on the joint to bury a metal plate under his skin.

"I never would've been able to predict someone would react the way she did," Hayne says. "She's been incredible. She is incredible."

Brenda Hayne says her son has one more item on his wish list: a device, similar to a walker, that would assist him in moving, upright, while out of his chair.

"I would really like to walk up the aisle on my own," Hayne told his mother.

### Soar like an eagle

Hayne and O'Donnell moved into a ground-level apartment

### Online resources

► **WWW.PARALYMPIC.ORG:** The Paralympic Games are held in the same year and at the same venue as the Olympic Games. Winter Games will take place in Salt Lake City next year, and Athens, Greece, hosts the 2004 Summer Games. Browse divisions of competition and sports included in the Paralympics.

► **WWW.DSUSA.ORG:** Disabled Sports USA, a national nonprofit, includes a magazine, event listings and chapter affiliations — including the U.S. Electric Wheelchair Hockey Association of New Hope, Minn.

► **WWW.WAPD.ORG:** World

Association of Persons with Disabilities is an information clearinghouse with a monthly online newsletter and hundreds of links to related resource sites.

► **WWW.USDOJ.GOV:** Know your rights. Read the Americans with Disabilities Act and other topics, ranging from workplace compliance to requesting assistance at self-serve gasoline pumps. The U.S. Department of Justice site includes a link to the ADA home page from the "Disabilities" heading in the "Information for Individuals and Communities" chart.

"He'd be there 10 minutes before and 10 minutes after class, so that was my window. But I probably wouldn't have met him otherwise, and he's a great guy."

Hayne's also seen support for people with disabilities in Brookings, although not all of it has come in the form of a helping hand. Pulling his sleek, black coupe into a handicapped parking space one day, he saw and heard two people wondering aloud — for his benefit — why he felt entitled to park there.

Later, he'd tell his mother that they watched as he silently pulled his chair from the car, unfolded it and eased himself onto the seat. In a way, they were speaking up for those who use wheelchairs to get around, but they didn't apologize for their mistake, Brenda Hayne says.

There have been other adjustments, too. When Hayne auditioned for SDSU's "Twelve Angry Jurors," which ran in late February, director Wheeler says he tried out accents to mask his readings.

"He's so used to playing characters and he's at ease when he can kind of hide behind that," Wheeler says. "I told him for the foreman on the jury, I wanted Jeff, the guy who wants everyone to get along, who sees a job and

knows it has to get done. The next night, we saw it. It's closer to himself than he's ever been on stage."

"He's always been a leader," Wheeler says. "People have always admired his work and this is one more thing for them to admire."

Hayne and O'Donnell look forward to his graduation and the move west, although the bride-to-be says they're procrastinating about setting a wedding date. She knows the planning involved, and with the move and job search, it's a lot to take in at once.

Brenda Hayne at first likened her son's accident to a death of sorts. Losing the use of his legs was giving up something they'd all taken for granted. But he's alive, and though he's the baby in the family by seven years, she's not worried about where he'll go from here.

"He's always had a love of eagles, since he was a little boy," she says. "I told him, 'An eagle doesn't run on the ground; an eagle soars. And that's what you're going to do. You're going to soar.'"

Reach reporter Jennifer Sanderson at jsanders@argusleader.com or 575-3629.

Coming to Sioux Falls... Steven B. Wiley

## THE Human Side of High Performance

Steven B. Wiley is a proven entrepreneur, author, and highly acclaimed speaker who has trained and entertained tens of thousands of top executives from around the world. He brings a wealth of knowledge in the areas of successful marketing, negotiation, sales and business development.

Now more than ever, businesses must empower their employees for the future. Empowerment will mean the adoption of strategic leadership practices, improving negotiating skills, increasing sales effectiveness and the enhancement of productivity through physical and mental wellness throughout the organization. Join us **Tuesday, April 10th** for an entertaining and informative session on the Human Side of High Performance. For more information on Steven B. Wiley go to [www.argusleader.com/wiley/html](http://www.argusleader.com/wiley/html)

Tuesday, April 10 • 8:00-11:30 am  
All Occasions  
Tea, South Dakota  
\$25 registration fee  
Includes Continental Breakfast

\$25 registration fee due by Friday, April 6.

Seating is limited.

Tuesday, April 10 • 8:00-11:30 • All Occasions • Tea, South Dakota  
Includes Continental Breakfast 8:00 • Seminar 8:30-11:30

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO: SIOUX FALLS BOARD OF REALTORS® • 201 W. 37TH ST. • SIOUX FALLS, SD 57105

SPONSORED BY

Argus Leader

R  
REALTOR®

For more information call the Sioux Falls Board of REALTORS®  
605.331.4752