



N.D. House Update

Reps. Bill Devlin and Don Vigasaa, District 23

Members of the upcoming 67th Legislative Assembly met in Bismarck December 1-3 for the organizational session. It was a whole different experience as almost everyone was wearing face masks or face shields, which were required by a temporary rule change voted on by the members in both chambers. The legislators also voted to require masks or shields during the upcoming session, where social distancing isn't possible, as the state continues to be impacted by COVID-19.

We remain hopeful that the vaccine will be available sooner than originally expected to help keep all of our citizens safe. We expect there will be much more virtual testimony this session, from not only legislators, but members of the public wanting to testify on bills and resolutions. We will provide more details as we get closer to the session.

During the organizational session, the legislators kept busy with technical training, the selection of committees and drafting rules for the session. Both of us were involved with the work of the Committee on Committees, which met a number of times to assign the 94 members

to their respective committees. Rep. Devlin was also on the Rules Committee and chaired an Administrative Rules Committee meeting on Tuesday morning.

We discussed at length which committees might be most beneficial to our constituents and made our selections accordingly. Rep. Vigasaa will again serve on the House Appropriations Committee, which meets five days per week. He will chair the Government Operations sub-section of appropriations again this session.

Rep. Devlin will again serve on the Human Services Committee the first three days of the week. He will then move to the Energy and Natural Resources Committee the last two days each week. Those are the same committees he served on last session.

Legislators listened as Gov. Doug Burgum presented his 2021-2023 Executive Budget, which provided an insight on how the Executive Branch wants to prioritize spending during the next biennium. We like some of the information he provided but remain concerned about how his approach might negatively affect rural North Dakota, in-

cluding our District.

His budget proposal for a 1% inflator for nursing homes, in-home care and basic care is certainly a concern to all rural facilities. The 2% raise he is proposing for state employees would be more helpful for long-term care, as they struggle to find the employees they need.

The proposal for lowering provider rates for those serving the Medicaid Expansion population is also of deep concern. It would have a huge negative impact on rural hospitals and most likely all hospitals in the state.

The freezing of the per pupil payment for schools is certainly a concern as are the cuts to higher education in his proposal. There are a lot of areas the Legislative Appropriation Committees will have to work through to make sure they best meet the needs of the state.

The proposal for bonding of infrastructure and other capital projects will also be a matter of contention. We understand the needs and wish lists, but the concern expressed by one of the leaders in the minority party, who said, "The last thing we need is to be shackled by debt" is shared by others in both parties. We will want to make sure that we don't mortgage the future of our state for something in this legislative session.

The Legislature will review the budget over the next few months and make changes they feel are necessary to best meet the needs of the citizens of our great state. While we

agree with some of the Governor's proposals, we will certainly want to make sure the needs of rural North Dakota, including District 23, are met in all areas. As always, the governor's budget is just a proposal until the Legislature completes its work.

People that want to review the budget in more detail can do so by going to the state website: www.nd.gov or the office of management and budget at www.nd.gov/omb/. There are links to various documents, offices, officials and other information.

In looking ahead to the next session, District 23 residents who wish to contact us with legislative ideas or comments on what is being discussed or proposed can e-mail us at: bdevlin@nd.gov and dvwigasaa@nd.gov. Before the session, mail can be sent to Rep. Don Vigasaa, PO Box 763, Cooperstown, ND 58425, and Rep. Bill Devlin, PO Box 505, Finley, ND 58230.

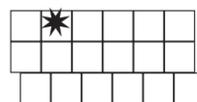
During the session, starting January 5, 2021 we will have a toll-free number where the state's residents can leave a message for any legislator. We will provide that number as the session starts.

We will be providing weekly columns once the session starts in January. We wish to thank the weekly newspaper publishers in our District, who provide space for our columns free of charge, for making that happen.

We also want to send Season's Greetings to all of you as we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Bill and Don.

Pleasant Prairie

by Charlotte Koeplin



Ervin Longnecker celebrated his 102nd birthday Dec. 3. Birthday greeters at the farm were Cory and Tammy Longnecker and granddaughter Kinlee and Charlotte Koeplin, Merle and Sandy Longnecker and Eric and Lisa Longnecker and family. The afternoon found others including Dale and Diane Rosenberg and Todd and Karen Koeplin sharing a birthday toast at Hanson's Bar and then a family supper at Merle and Sandy's. Ervin also enjoyed phone calls from niece Marla Peters from Ketchikan, Alaska and his sister Lucille Saldivar from Anaheim, Calif.

One afternoon Margie Anderson stopped in at the Ryan and Laura Hager home to get acquainted with new great-grandson Jamison Allen.

Wednesday found Charlotte Koeplin and Candy Jensen in Devils Lake where Charlotte got good

news following an eye appointment. The gals did a little shopping and enjoyed a McDonald's treat on the ride home.

Ervin Longnecker and Dale Rosenberg helped Bill Zeigler Saturday pick up Santa and Mrs. Claus in his horse-drawn buggy and took them to the Rockford Theater where they met many as all celebrated Santa Day in New Rockford.

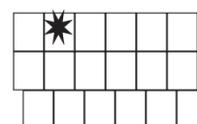
Charlotte Koeplin checked out the sausage-making Saturday at the Martin and Janelle Koeplin home. Got there just in time to do some sampling. Pretty good stuff.

Margie Anderson enjoyed recent phone chats with Marry Ellen Turcott of Minneapolis and granddaughter Joanna Larson of Bremerton, Wash. All are doing fine.

Cory Jorgenson enjoyed a cup of coffee and a morning chat at the Ervin Longnecker home Monday.

Talk of the Town

by Charlotte Koeplin



Shirley Packard enjoyed a phone call from Mary Lynn (Wangen) Hawks Sunday from her home in Centralia, Wash. Vivian Pfeiffer is Aunt to Mary.

Thursday Eloise Lucht and daughter Heidi Schneider drove to Grand Forks where Eloise got good news following an eye appointment.

Saturday the Martin and Janelle Koeplin garage was the scene of some stuffing and cranking as Martin and son Aaron and helpers kept up the annual tradition of sausage making. The gals, Janelle, Chevelle and Kerigan took a break and enjoyed the Santa Day movie and Santa's arrival at the theater in the afternoon. Taylor and Amanda and Evelyn and Todd and Karen Koeplin also stopped in briefly.

Cheryl Janzen was up to one of her favorite things to do Tuesday on her day off as she pitched in and volunteered at the TLC Animal Rescue in Devils Lake. She delivered items donated by Brenda and Dillion Rue and Gregg and pet supplies from Linda Martin. All to help care for the many healthy cats and dogs that are available for adoption.

Friday found Kevin Johnson doing some errands for Shirley Packard and Todd Harrison stopped in to lend a hand.

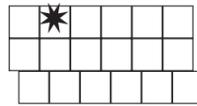
Ken and Marvis Holte received a phone call from Marvis' sister Ardy Yates from Arkansas Sunday. Ardy's mother in law had fallen and broke her hip, was in a hospital and is doing fine.

Candy Jensen called niece Teresa Sather of Fargo Saturday and wished her a happy 62nd birthday. All is okay at the Sather home.

Eloise Lucht got a chance to visit with her sister, Ann from Alaska recently where all is okay.

Oberon Oracles

by Linda Madson



Monday, Charlotte Simon and several other ladies baked sugar cookies for the Christmas sugar cookie kits that will be sold by MOHA (Maddock Opera House Association). The kits contain sugar cookies, frosting and sprinkles. The ladies baked enough cookies to fill 32 boxes.

Charlotte and other volunteers set up and decorated the Christmas tree and decorated Harrimans Coffee House on Tuesday.

On Wednesday, Charlotte visited her mother, Joan Bosch at the Care Center in Rugby.

Friday evening, Randy and Charlotte traveled to Grand Forks and were overnight guests at Heidi, Carson, Max and Elin Thompson's home.

Saturday, Randy and Charlotte went on to Oxbow to visit Mark, Tessa, Mason and Miles Simon and were overnight guests. They re-

turned home on Sunday. Brittin Buehler watched over her grandparents, Todd and Nadley Buehler a few times last week.

Scott and Marilyn Thompson visited Todd and Nadley Sunday afternoon.

Lacey Grann and Travis Cowan from Highmore, S.D., flew down to Texas to visit Bobbi Grann and Logan Olson in Stephenville, Texas. They all attended Round 2 and Round 4 of the Wrangler NFR in Arlington, Texas.

Gene Woolley was a Sunday evening dinner guest at John and Donna Grann's.

Johnny Grann started basketball practice on Monday.

Linda Madson and Mr. Syl Brown were Sunday afternoon coffee guests at Melodie Madson's home.

Words to Live By: There are two kinds of people who don't say much—those who are quiet and those who talk a lot.

Obituaries



Betty Smith Carrington, N.D.

Betty Smith, 89, passed peacefully on Nov. 26, 2020 at Golden Acres Manor, Carrington, N.D.

Mass of Christian burial was held Saturday, Dec. 12, 2020 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Carrington, N.D. Burial was held at the St. Peter's and Paul Catholic Cemetery, McHenry, N.D. Fr. Christian Smith and Fr. Terry Dodge officiated with special music by Marlene Boyer and Natalie Becker. Liturgy readers were Shayla Smith, Jenna Smith and Allie Gowan. Casket bearers were Aaron Smith, Joe Smith, Zachary Smith, Mitchell Smith, Jacob Smith, Carter Smith and Fr. Christian Smith. Honorary bearers were all of Betty's grandchildren.

Betty was born Feb. 1, 1931 Wyard Township - rural Carrington, N.D., to Peter and Mary (Kubzik) Becker.

She married Stanley Smith

Dec. 27, 1951 in McHenry, N.D. Betty worked tirelessly raising five sons and helping out on the farm/ranch. She later worked for Posi Lock in McHenry and Cooperstown. She was a member of St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church (McHenry) and later Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Carrington. She had an unwavering faith and love for God.

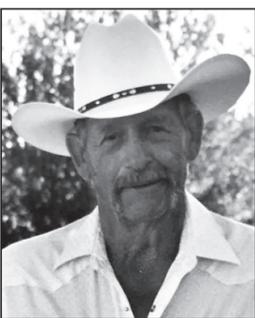
She had a large family of children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren who will dearly miss her.

Betty is survived by her loving husband of nearly 69 years, children Dr. Jeff Smith (Tracey Albers), Bismarck, N.D.; Kerry (Kari) Smith, Carrington, N.D.; Dr. Kirk (Donita) Smith, Lino Lakes, Minn.; Dr. Stuart (Ruth) Smith, Bismarck, N.D. and Andrew (Barbie) Smith, Bismarck, N.D.; 13 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, and five great-great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her infant son Joseph, her parents, brothers Eugene and Edward, and sister Marjorie Yanke.

Betty's family would like to thank the Staff at Golden Acres for their loving care and compassion. A special thanks to family and friends that came to visit during her extended time at Golden Acres.

Arrangments by Evans Funeral Home of Carrington, N.D.



Eugene LaMotte Devils Lake, N.D.

Eugene Harlan "Gene" LaMotte Sr., 83, of Devils Lake formerly of the Wood Lake-Tokio area passed away on Tuesday, Dec. 1, 2020 at Essentia Health, Fargo, N.D.

Mass of Christian Burial was held on Friday, Dec. 11, 2020 at 10 a.m. at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Devils Lake with burial in St. Joseph's Catholic Cemetery. Military Honors were accorded by the Neathery-Simonsen Post #756, Devils Lake Veterans of Foreign Wars and the North Dakota Military Funeral Honors Team. The funeral Mass will be live-streamed on facebook.com/stjosephdvl. Visitation was held at the Gilbertson Funeral Home, Devils Lake on Thursday, Dec. 10 from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. with a Rosary at 7 p.m. Casket bearers were Brady Peterson, Tim Peterson, Randy Peterson, Gene LaMotte Jr., Todd LaMotte, Jim LaMotte and Paul Hanson. Scripture readers were Bob LaMotte and Wanda Peterson was the Eucharistic Gift Bearer. Honorary bearers were all of Gene's many dear friends and neighbors.

Gene, son of Lector and Caroline (Halvorson) LaMotte was born on Nov. 25, 1937 at McVillie, N.D. At a very young age, Gene moved with the family to the Felix LaMotte farm, southeast of Hamar, where Lector worked as a farm laborer. Only a few years later, the family moved to the Eugene LaMotte Homestead (the house has been restored and still stands today) again in the Hamar area where Gene attended the Colvin #1 Township School. In 1945, another move brought them to the Breckheimer farm, and Gene attended Colvin #2 Township School and graduated from the eighth grade. Gene and his brothers walked 2 1/2 mi. to and from their one-room schoolhouse or rode their pony. In 1951 another family move brought them to Hamar. As

a young man, Gene worked for several area farmers and for Archie Cambell at the Crystal Springs Ranch near Warwick. He also drove gravel truck and worked road construction for Hulstrand Construction.

Gene was drafted into the United States Army on Aug. 29, 1961 and proudly and honorably served his country during the Cuban Missile Crisis, ready at a moment's notice to be deployed. He did serve in Germany for about 1 1/2 years. He was honorably discharged from active duty on Aug. 13, 1963 with the rank of PFC. He continued his service with the Reserve until Aug. 28, 1967.

Gene was united in marriage to his sweetheart, Janelle DeVoogdt on March 27, 1967. They established their home on the former Fredrick Farm, that Gene had purchased in 1965, south of Wood Lake. This is where they farmed, and established Wood Lake Dairy, and raised their family through the years. In 1979 they built a state-of-art dairy barn that brought them notoriety as being very progressive as dairy farmers. In 1986, they dispersed the dairy herd and began raising beef cattle. Janelle died on July 6, 1991. In 2001 Gene sold the farm and moved south of Fort Totten. For 10 plus years, Gene has called Devils Lake home.

First and foremost, Gene loved his family, took great pleasure in being a grandpa and great-grandpa and was a good friend to many.

Gene's loving family includes his daughter Wanda and her husband Brady Peterson of Rocklake, N.D., his son Eugene LaMotte Jr. and his wife Sally of Devils Lake, N.D.; grandchildren Tim Peterson and Randy Peterson, Lorelee LaMotte (Matt) and Lukas LaMotte (Mychal); Great-Granddaughter Alexis Hill; brothers Robert LaMotte, Devils Lake, N.D. and Tom (Mary) LaMotte, Warwick N.D.; mother-in-law Margaret DeVoogdt also of Devils Lake, N.D.; in-laws JoAnn (Gary) Grad, Casa Grande Ariz., Jim DeVoogdt, Tokio N.D.; numerous nieces, nephews and their families.

He was preceded in death by his parents, wife Janelle, grandson Clay James LaMotte, brother Joseph in infancy, father-in-law Joe DeVoogdt and sisters-in-law Mardell LaMotte and Linde Pare'.

Arrangements by Gilbertson Funeral Home of Devils Lake, N.D.

permanent injuries, they gave up active farming and spent winters in Apache Junction, Ariz. In 2007 they returned to Carrington residing at the Carrington Gardens apartments.

She was an active member of St. George's Catholic Church in Apache Junction, Ariz. After moving back to North Dakota, she attended Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Carrington.

Shirley is survived by two daughters, Diana Condon, Naples, Fla., RJ "Joyce" Erickson, Sedona, Ariz.; two sons, Rick Erickson, Norridge, Ill. and Robert Erickson, Apache Junction, Ariz.; a brother Robert (Pat) Nihill, Kensal, N.D. and two sisters Jean Nelson, Fargo, N.D., and Sandra Balvitsch, Carrington, N.D.; six grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Dick, her daughters Linda Erickson and Elaine Schultz, her granddaughter Tanya Erickson, and her brothers George, John (Jack) and Tom Nihill.

Arrangements by Evans Funeral Home of Carrington, N.D.



Shirley Nihill-Erickson Bordulac, N.D.

Shirley Nihill-Erickson, age 93, of Bordulac, N.D., died Sunday, Nov. 29, 2020, in Golden Acres Manor, Carrington, N.D. Services will be held in the spring.

Shirley Anna Nihill was born April 23, 1927, at Kensal, N.D., the eldest daughter of John and Myrtle (Syvertson) Nihill. She attended Kensal High School. On May 29, 1944, Shirley was united in marriage to Richard (Dick) Erickson at St. John's Catholic Church in Kensal.

Shirley and Dick were lifelong ranchers and farmers in the Bordulac area. In 1966, after a farming accident in which he sustained

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