

# Dakota Attitude

## John and Susan (Stroh) Svoboda

Interview: November 15, 2017  
County: Grand Forks • City: Johnstown

### “Everybody Will Always Have Garbage”



John and Susan Svoboda were married in 1962 and live in Johnstown, current population about 20. But their school is two miles west of Johnstown.

The Midway Public School has an enrollment of approximately 170 students from K-12 and is a consolidated district of seven communities: Inkster, Honeyford, Gilby, Forest River, Mekinock, Ardoch, and Johnstown.

“Dad was in the livestock hauling business since 1930,” John says. “I started doing that with him, and we took it over eventually. We got into the garbage business in 1971 and out of the hauling cattle business in 1975. The guy I sold it to probably had five pretty good years before everybody got their own pickups and trailers. After everybody had their own equipment, the cattle hauling business disappeared.”

At first, the garbage business contracted with the towns of Gilby and Manvel to collect their trash and haul it to the landfill in Grand Forks. “We had converted a cattle truck into a garbage truck, and my cousin was up in the cattle rack with me throwing the plastic bags of garbage up to him. I drove along, would jump out, throw the plastic bags, and get back

*(Editor’s Note: The following profiles of North Dakota residents were collected by author James Puppe between 2004-2018, covering 617 subjects and 113,000 miles. He has given permission for his book to be serialized in North Dakota Newspapers at no charge. To find out how you can read the entire collection of Dakota Attitude profiles go to [dakotaattitude.com](http://dakotaattitude.com).)*

in and go. He was my packer up in the box,” John laughs.

Svoboda Sanitation Service, established since 1971, has used slogans like “It’s garbage to you, but it’s our bread and butter!” and “Satisfaction guaranteed or double your garbage back.” Susan says of the latter, “That’s a good one; I still use that one a lot.”

The average route is about 120 miles in a day. John says, “That’s one load—about eight-and-a-half tons of garbage.” There is even a portable microwave installed in the truck. For lunch on the go, Susan says, “I pre-fry hamburgers ’cause it gets rid of some of the grease, and then keep them on ice in a cooler along with ketchup and pickles. Then we microwave the hamburgers.”

She says they enjoy the work most days, and they aren’t worried about job security. “Everybody will always have garbage!” Susan defines success in life as “hard work.”

## Grace (Peterson) Chewakin

Interview: July 22, 2015  
County: Mountrail  
City: Lunds Valley

### “You Have to Be Compassionate”



The former Grace Peterson became a registered nurse, married Don Chewakin [a veteran of Korea], and moved to a farm in Emmons County. She and Don raised four children, and Grace was the first RN at Strasburg Care Center.

“You’re in [patients]’ lives completely. You have to be compassionate to care for them; you have to do your best whether they appreciate it or not. We used to have people that didn’t have clothing. They didn’t have anything for themselves. In fact, that’s why many of them were buried in one of Don’s old shirts or somebody else’s old suit jacket. I found out I was glad I lived 12 miles from work; I could gain control by the time I got home.

“But I think I was fortunate in that people did appreciate the little things, anything that was done for them. They appreciated everything we did, and it was always hard to say goodbye. The staff were told, ‘If you’re not doing a task, go visit the patients. Stand by and talk to them.’ Because they wanted that one-to-one communication.

“Most of the people I took care of have a good faith background, but those that probably didn’t either didn’t show an emotion or they brushed it off as not necessary. But I think most of them would like the pastor or the priest to come and see them, just comfort them.”

Grace’s attributes her ability to empathize with the ill and the dying to her parents’ influence. “We were told to do what’s right, whatever we did, and respect people. My parents were great on that. Maybe they need a good word once in a while, a kind word. We’re not all perfect, you know, a whole bunch of us came with a chip on our shoulder sometimes.

“I think I’m luckier than most. Because I got to go to school, got an education, I live in a good country, people have been good to me. I think our country has absolutely got me the best of anything on earth. Yeah, I got no complaint.”

## LEGALS FROM PAGE 13

Vision Security LLC; 66190.00 Rob Brooks; 859.99 Slope Electric Coop. Inc.; 419414.00 Slope Farmers Fair; 250.00 Southwest Multi-County Correction Center; 123.69 Southwest Water Authority; 14.42 The Badlands Patriot LLC; 1050.00 Vanguard Appraisals Inc; 127.94 Boss Office Products; 209.15 Butler Machinery Company; 416.05 Consolidated Telcom; 353.50 Linde Gas & Equipment Inc; 44.92 ProPoint Cooperative; 1789.16 Payroll.

The commissioners met with Joan Lorge, Slope County Tax Director, by phone to discuss the land values for 2026. Commissioner Teske presented a motion to assess the ag land at 98% of the land values according to the State of North Dakota which is a 5.5% decrease compared to 2025 values. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sonsalla and passed with all in favor.

Erin Melling, Slope County State’s Attorney, met with the commissioners by phone to discuss the county’s ability to donate to the Bowman Fire Department for the new building they are planning since they have a 501(c)3 status. Commissioner Teske presented a motion to sign a letter of support for the Bowman Fire Department to be used for a grant application. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ouradnik and passed with all in favor.

Billy Doerr, Brosz Engineering met with the commissioners to discuss the grant funding that was applied for. They have not heard who the grants were awarded to.

Discussion was held on elections. The precinct designation will remain the same as it has been with polling locations at Pierce Church, the Slope County Courthouse and Marmarth Community Center.

Commissioner Sonsalla presented a motion to continue the radar contract for another year. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Teske and passed with all in favor.

Slope County will not contribute to the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway this year.

Commissioner Ouradnik presented a

motion to appoint Mike H Sonsalla as the representative to the Little Missouri Scenic River Commission with Shannon Minerich as his proxy. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Teske and passed with all in favor.

Commissioner Teske presented a motion to appoint David Burke to the Slope County Water Resource Board. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sonsalla and passed with all in favor.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 A.M.

Scott Ouradnik, Chairman  
Lorrie Buzalsky, Auditor

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Case No. 06-2025-PR-00034  
IN THE DISTRICT COURT  
OF BOWMAN COUNTY,

### STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF CAROL I. DONLEY, AKA CAROL DONLEY, Deceased.

#### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN That the undersigned have been appointed personal representatives of the above estate. All persons having claims against the said deceased are required to present their claims within three months after the date of the first publication of this notice or said claims will be forever barred. Claims must either be presented to Brian Donley, the personal representative of the estate, at 5423 Village Station Circle, Williamsville, NY 14221, or filed with the Court.

Dated this 5th day of February, 2025.

/s/ Brian Donley  
Brian Donley  
5423 Village Station Circle  
Williamsville, NY 14221

WILD & WEISS LAW OFFICE, P.C.  
PO BOX 260  
BOWMAN, NORTH DAKOTA 58623

Attorney for Personal Representative  
First publication on the 13th day of February, 2025.  
E/6010-009.1

## Dale and Norine (Wilkinson) Knudson

Interview: August 9, 2017  
County: Stutsman  
City: Pingree

### “What a Beautiful World We Live In”



Norine tells one of her dad’s stories from World War I: “It wasn’t action, but the night before a battle. Clergy were goin’ around to ask if they want to be baptized, and so they came to my dad, and they asked him if he wanted to be baptized, and he says, ‘Well, okay.’ ‘Well, what faith do you want to be baptized in?’ ‘Well, what haven’t they taken so far?’ They hadn’t taken Presbyterian, so he became a Presbyterian before a battle in France. I don’t think he was ever at a Presbyterian church after that.”

Norine Wilkinson and Dale Knudson were married in 1959. Norine relates what happened on their first date: “The first time we actually did anything I went up to him before the intermission of a dance right down here and asked him, because every time I’d be dancing past ’im, he seemed to be looking at me, and I went up to him and says, ‘You want to take me home tonight?’ He said yes. He was very bashful.”

Dale was born in 1939. He grew up in Pingree and left Pingree High School early to join the service. After his mili-

tary service, Dale returned to the farm. “I took pride in farming. I enjoyed growing things. I started work for the post office. I was a rural mail carrier.”

Carrying the mail had its hazards. “Some of ’em played tricks on me. They used to put pennies in the [mailbox] when they wanted to buy stamps, and they were always trickin’ me with something. Well, this Clark girl filled a little jar with pennies and water. I couldn’t see the water. I pulled [the jar] in and just dumped it on my lap, yeah. I thought it was very hilarious. And I was sure she was standin’ in the house watchin’ me.”

Dale says, “I started garden- ing two years ago again. I never had a garden for 40 years. My objective is to make this world beautiful. That’s why I grow things. I can look at these ol’ ragged trees, and I think, ‘What a beautiful world we live in.’ To me the green grass, everything, is just beautiful. The crops. It’s a beautiful world at Pingree.”

## Bowman County School Help Wanted

- 7 - 12 Grade Math Teacher
- Para Professional - Full-Time
- Part-Time or Full-Time Custodian
- Bus Driver (Willing to Train)
- Sub Para-Professionals
- Substitute Teachers

Contact Anni Carlson to inquire  
about this position @701-523-3283, or  
[anni.carlson@k12.nd.us](mailto:anni.carlson@k12.nd.us)