

North Dakota Newspapers Thankful For Legislative Votes

By Cecile Wehrman, NDNA Executive Director
On the whole, North Dakota legislators understand the importance of newspapers and their actions during the 2025 legislative session show it.

Legislators protected the publication of county minutes in newspapers voting down a bill that would have given the option to post them only on county websites; voted to keep high-way bid notices in newspapers rather than only posting them on trade or government agency websites; restored the historic practice of spreading publication of insurance abstracts across all newspapers in the state instead of just eight; passed a postal resolution asking for better delivery service for newspapers and consumers alike; and on Wednesday passed a bill that gives legal weight to www.ndpublicnotices.com, a website maintained by the North Dakota Newspaper Association.

SB 2069 was the first bill I testified on back on Jan. 9, and the last of the five bills passed among those we were most concerned about. The bill pro-



vides two backstops for legal notices in the rare instance a newspaper fails to publish a notice, counting a notice at ndpublicnotices.com as well as a notice on a state agency website, as fulfilling legal notice, while leaving requirements for publication of print notices in place.

Because I wrote on this topic earlier in the session, it's important to let people know what is NOT happening.

The state will NOT be developing a public notice website capable of cutting newspapers out of public notice placements at some future point. It was, however, a discussion among some legislators who saw this bill as a way to take a step toward eliminating the costs of publishing notices in newspapers.

When you know there are people in government who feel notices in newspapers have no value, it can seem like your house is on fire.

But the votes on some of the bills I mentioned above show that, by and large, legislators support upholding newspapers as the vehicle for delivering public notices.

Just look at some of these tallies: HB 1380, the county minutes on the web bill failed in the House 80-13; HB 1398, restoring the historical abstract publication process, passed in the House 86-6; and SB 2069, though it had a closer vote in the Senate, possibly due to some confusion since we opposed it originally, passed in the House 72-17; SB 2062, taking highway bids out of newspapers failed 89-4.

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The stock market crashed in 1929. The Great Depression and the dust bowl of the dirty thirties followed. The new deal and the war effort brought the United States out of that depression and the happiness index peaked in the United States in 1958. Social clubs, churches, and bowling leagues were full.

The happiness index has been declining and selfishness and isolation have been increasing since then. In a tragic way, current political leaders are actually celebrating being **free riders**, while accusing the poor or the immigrants, or other minority groups for any perceived international or domestic problems.

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That feels, to me, like an incredible showing of support for the importance of public notices in newspapers.

Now, 73 privately owned businesses operating newspapers can breathe a sigh of relief, along with voters.

We know citizens give overwhelming support to the concept of a trusted third party like newspapers having oversight of public notices.

SB 2069 as passed will now solve the issue of a public hearing needing to be rescheduled because one out of a dozen or more papers required to publish it had a miss.

I wish I could say newspapers are perfect, but every business occasionally has a hiccup due to illness, death, employee turnover, heck, even a cyber attack, which can cause highly consequential notices to be missed.

You'll still never convince me that a website alone is where public notices should be placed because the mechanism for people to see them is much different than for people sitting down with a newspaper delivering news about their community along with notices about the government actions that may impact them.

However, in the end, SB 2069 is a good compromise, providing an alternate avenue for people to learn of a pending hearing when unforeseen disruptions impact newspapers, while leaving alone the printed newspapers' supremacy as the trusted place to access public notices in North Dakota.

Understanding Cooperation

By Bill Patrie

I have spent much of my professional career helping people build cooperative business. I have been given a lifetime membership in the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA).

Human cooperation is not limited to business. Robert Kurzban, an evolutionary psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania wrote an article on why humans cooperate. I invited Kurzban to the Peace Garden in North Dakota to discuss his findings.

My summary of his findings include: A general population can be broken into three types of people relative to the willingness to cooperate.

About 13% of any population are **born cooperators**. They serve on the church and school boards; they know how to organize and solve problems and they are the first to call others to organize solutions.

The second group are **intolerant reciprocators**. They follow the cooperators but quit cooperating when they feel they are being "free ridden". They give in order to get. This group is about 63% of a population.

The third group is the **free riders** who make up 20% of a population.



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Robert Putnam wrote "Bowling Alone" in 2000, chronicling the rise and decline in "social equity" and the loss of engagement in churches, clubs,

bowling leagues and the collapse of "American Community."

He wrote "The Upswing" in 2020. Putnam predicts a severe enough economic or international crisis would once again trigger a rise in human cooperation.

J. Henry Carpenter wrote the book "Peace Through Cooperation" during World War II. Carpenter was an executive with the Federal Council of Churches which became the National Council of Churches. He also worked with the Cooperative League of the United States (CLUSA) now known as the National Cooperative Business Association.

Carpenter writes "Our conception, our definition of the Church, states just that: the Church is the organization whose primary purpose is to establish co-operation and to render love operative. When I speak of the Church, I am not referring to ministers and priests, ruling boards or bodies, its "political" or business aspects. But the real thing we are talking about is the Church in relation to people."

Carpenter saw the teachings of Jesus as a foundation for democracy. Jesus wept over Jerusalem, the most conflicted city in history. One of the 7 Cooperative principles is concern for community. I, too, believe that human cooperation is the work of the church and all of us. May it be so.

Bill Patrie is a retired planner and economic developer having worked in regional and statewide positions. He is the author of "Creating Co-op Fever" printed by USDA as a service bulletin, and "100 Stories of Hope" a book about his interviews with 100 people in poverty.



The Passing Scene By Dennis Patrick

An Easter Postlude

Easter offers a time to reflect on the reality of Christ and the blessings flowing from a Christian culture. You may find the following instances refreshing to ponder. A Christian culture spawned these blessings.

Set up a multitude of hospitals throughout the world from the Middle Ages onward.

Founded many universities and centers of learning also dating from the Middle Ages.

Fostered literacy and education for all people across cultures.

Developed the economic basis of what is today known as free-enterprise.

Gave the world the foundation of representative government.

Provided the genesis of civil liberties.

Started the centuries-long struggle against slavery.

Laid the foundation of modern science.

Set up many continuing charities and benevolent organizations.

Laid the groundwork for higher standards of justice.

Provided a sense of value of human life especially for the elderly, infirm, and unborn.

Codified and wrote many of the world's languages.

Inspired some of the world's greatest works of art, music, and literature.

This rich endowment comes from the impact of the Gospel spread by those who believed in, lived by, and sacrificed for that Gospel. They accepted Jesus Christ for who He said He was. Collectively and corporately over the centuries they formed a culture.

Today, whether from naiveté, historical illiteracy, or the voiding of traditions and conventions, western culture has become separated from an awareness of its own roots. Even Easter has become a casualty. Faced with mounting criticism and reproach, the Christian significance of Easter morphed into something rather secular.

Implications persist from the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was not raised to institute a social welfare system or establish a university of wellbeing. The scripture record makes clear that God's Son, Jesus Christ, came to restore and preserve a relationship with His creation. No preaching or theological diatribe here. Just recounting the written record, the New Testament, pointing to a mystery being revealed within believers every day.

John 14:20 "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

II Corinthians 4:6 "For God ... hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, ...10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. 11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."

II Corinthians 13:5 "...Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you...?"

Galatians 1:15 "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my

mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me ... I conferred not with flesh and blood ..."

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Philippians 1:20 "According to my earnest expectation and my hope ... Christ shall be magnified in my body ..."

Colossians 1:26 "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory ... 29 Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."

These are just a few verses. There are more, many more.

A wayward and rebellious people could be restored to a right relationship with their Creator if only the kingdom of Self would be replaced by the kingdom of God in the hearts of people. The sin nature of rebellion against God, of "doing your own thing," could be expunged and replaced by Christ's nature. All sense of placing oneself first above God could be overcome.

And Jesus said, "...The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:21-22) Paul's definition: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Romans 14:17)

When allowed Christ rules in that kingdom and God the Father may be glorified by each believer through His indwelling Son made manifest day by day. The resurrection of Jesus Christ signifies far more than joining a religious club and going to Heaven in the sky in the sweet bye-and-bye. It starts now.

This should not be offensive to anyone. May the reality of the indwelling Christ be genuine start point for all people this Easter.

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Trails Across Mountrail By Jim Hennessy



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Weed Management For Lawns

Fertilizing, Mowing, Watering And Other Lawn Weed Control Tips

Many times, a weed-free lawn can seem like something that only occurs in televised golf tournaments. I don't know about you, but every spring I struggle to keep dandelion, nutsedge, and quack grass from taking over my lawn.

While herbicides can help manage weeds in lawns, no single product will work against all weeds. For example, products that contain 2,4-D are designed for broadleaf weeds and won't work for grasses. Unless care is taken, herbicides can be dangerous to lawns, flowers, pets, and people. A successful weed management program takes advantage of many approaches including cultural practices, mowing, and, if necessary, herbicides.

The key to managing weeds is to out-compete them with a dense and vigorous lawn. Most weeds have very little chance of establishing if thick grass blocks sunlight, captures moisture and takes advantage of available nutrients.

A good fertilization program can help grow a dense and competitive lawn. Be aware that too much fertilizer, while helping to nurture a lawn, will also feed the weeds. Also, too little fertilizer can lead to a sparse and uncompetitive lawn. When purchasing fertilizer, choose one with a high percentage of controlled-release nitrogen to provide a slow, steady nutrient supply. Consider having soil tested as well, so you know how much fertilizer is needed.

Mowing can help manage weeds, but it can also hurt your lawn. Frequent mowing weakens grass by reducing its ability to capture enough sunlight and produce food. Moreover, a short lawn allows too much sunlight to reach the soil surface, helping weed seeds sprout and grow. Mowing at the highest possible level, usually between 2 and 4 inches, will help manage unwanted weeds.

Frequency and timing of watering are also crucial to healthy lawns. Usually, lawns need about one inch of water per week. As a general rule, the best approach is to water lawns infrequently and deeply. Providing a lawn with infrequent, deep soakings helps grow deep-rooted grasses and prevents the germination and growth of shallow-rooted weeds.

Identifying weeds is also essential to reduce their spread and abundance. Grass and broadleaf weeds that are found in lawns fall into two main groups: annuals and perennials. Annual weeds, such as crabgrass and shepherd's-purse, are not that difficult to control. A perennial plant, on the other hand, lives for more than one year and grows back from the roots each year. Perennials also produce seeds, which can give rise to new plants. To effectively control deep-rooted perennials, such as Canada thistle or bindweed, concentrate efforts on managing their roots. Roots of perennials often have vegetative buds, growing deep in the soil.

Believe it or not, hand-pulling is still one of the best defenses against weeds. Pulling annual weeds before they flower and seed is the simplest way to prevent them from spreading. Hand-pulling is easier when soil is moist. A sharp spade or digger can help do the job.

When using an herbicide, choose one that is labeled for the type of lawn you have and is effective against the weeds you have. Before spraying any herbicide, read the label and follow directions carefully. Some herbicides work within a certain temperature range; others need to be applied at a specific time of year. When used incorrectly, herbicides can injure or kill turf and other desirable plants.

Planting Trees And Shrubs

For more pride and enjoyment in a well-landscaped yard, plant carefully before buying and planting nursery stock. A scale drawing of your yard will

provide a basic plan that you can use for many years. Trees and shrubs are essential elements of this plan. Invest wisely by planting them properly. Purchase your stock from local nurseries.

They know the problems and planting dates of your area and likely will have the species and cultivars suited to your needs.

Trees and shrubs purchased out of our region may prove to be tender and entirely unsuited to North Dakota conditions. In addition, nursery grown plants are usually of better quality than native plants since they have benefited from pruning, watering and fertilization. Roots of these plants have been pruned frequently to stimulate branching which makes them easier to transplant than unpruned plants.

Size

Trees and shrubs are available in sizes varying from seedlings to large trees. Modern tree-moving machines are available in some regions of North Dakota. They are capable of moving deciduous or evergreen trees with trunks 3 to 6 inches in diameter. These machines tend to leave glazed sides in their planting holes, especially where clay and moisture content is high. Such glazing can be almost impenetrable to roots. The sides and bottom of the hole should be scarified or roughened with a shovel to intermingle the backfill soil with the field soil to reduce this interface and provide easier access for developing roots.

The size of a tree or shrub at planting time often affects its ability to establish. For practical and economic reasons, consider buying medium sizes of trees and shrubs since they usually recover more readily from transplanting shock and establish faster than larger plants. A general rule of thumb is that for each inch in diameter of trunk size, a year is required to adjust for transplant shock or root loss.

Five Forms Available

1. Bare-root (BR) trees and shrubs are the most economical type to buy but the most difficult to store and establish. With bare root stock, care is necessary to protect plants until they are planted. Examine the condition of your stock upon arrival. Keep moist packing material around the roots and store plants in a cool place out of the sun and wind. Plant as soon as possible. Plant bareroot nursery stock in early spring before growth starts. The later bare-root stock is planted, the greater the danger of reduced survival and vigor.

2. Balled and burlapped stock (B&B) is plant material dug with a portion of the root system undisturbed. The soil ball is held intact by a burlap wrap. Evergreens as well as large non-evergreen trees may be handled and sold in this manner. It is desirable to plant B&B nursery stock in spring before growth starts. Pine and spruce may also be moved in late August and September and hardy non-evergreen trees upon leaf-drop. Research has shown that fall planted nursery stock, especially evergreens, should be planted four weeks before soil temperature drops below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Soil temperatures below 40 F. inhibit new root growth.

3. Potted stock (P) is plant material that has been grown in a container for less than one growing season. Local nurserymen obtain bare-root stock and pot prior to spring sale. Such stock can be planted throughout the growing season. Remove containers and take care to maintain the root ball intact at planting time.

4. Container-grown stock (CG) has been growing in a container for one or more seasons. Consequently, the soil medium in the container is usually bound well by dense roots, making transplanting an easier task. Always remove containers before planting. **Caution:** roots of vigorous container grown plants may grow around and around the inside of the container. Recent research shows that these "circling" roots may not develop strong new anchor roots, but continue growing in a circle around the soil-root ball and may eventually girdle the plant. We recommend that these roots be spread or cut at planting time to encourage normal root growth.

5. "Instant trees" include large-sized stock transplanted by a machine. Large non-evergreen trees are best moved in early spring before growth starts. Hardy species can also be successfully moved in the fall upon leaf-drop. Large evergreens are also best moved in early spring. However, spruce and pine can be successfully moved in late August or September.

Caution: Transplanting shock is severe when large trees are moved in active growth.

Planting

Dig each hole about twice the diameter of the container or rootball. Remove clay subsoil from the bottom of the holes and replace with topsoil when planting. This is especially important near foundations where poor soil may have been used for backfill. Water thoroughly after planting to settle the soil. Supply water every 10 days during the establishment period. With

larger size stock, attention to watering should extend through the second or additional growing seasons according to the rule of thumb above. Therefore a three-inch diameter tree may need watering for three years.

Legislator Pay

**By Ann Estvold,
NDNA Legislative Intern**

A Minot legislator's decision to take a week's vacation during the legislative session has recently drawn attention to the state lawmakers' compensation and when they receive it.

All lawmakers receive minimum pay of \$592 monthly for each month they serve, which equals \$7,194 annually. Members of the North Dakota House and Senate are elected to four-year terms. The monthly pay is labeled "expense reimbursement or compensation."

When the Legislature is in session the members are paid \$213 a day, which totals \$1,491 for all seven days of the week. The weekly pay is in addition to their \$592 monthly "base pay." Lawmakers outside the Bismarck-Mandan area also receive a housing allowance during the session of up to \$2,022 a month.

At the end of the Legislature's daily floor sessions, during which members of the House and Senate vote on bills and amendments, both chambers vote to "excuse" any members who are absent. If a legislator is excused, he or she receives their daily pay.

This practice drew attention after a report that Representative Lori VanWinkle, R-Minot, had decided to take a week off from the Legislature to go on a ski vacation. Annoyed House members called for a vote on whether VanWinkle should be excused, and the motion was approved.

During their time between sessions, legislators are also asked to serve on interim committees to study issues in preparation for the next session. Interim committees typically meet for one or two days

every three months. Lawmakers are paid \$213 per day, the same amount as the session, for attending interim meetings.

They are also given meal reimbursement of up to \$45 a day, along with motel and mileage reimbursement. The meal, lodging and mileage costs are the same as the reimbursement paid to state employees for on-the-job travel within North Dakota. Legislators do not receive meal reimbursement during the session.

Members of the Legislature's leadership and committee chairmen receive extra pay. The majority and minority leaders of the House and Senate and the Speaker of the House are paid an extra \$15 a day during the legislative session. Committee chairmen, and assistant majority and minority leaders, are paid \$10 a day extra.

The Legislature's majority and minority leaders, and the chairman of the Legislative Management, are also paid an additional \$424 a month. This is part of the "base pay" for these positions and does not depend on whether the Legislature is in session.

The Legislative Management is a fourteen-member committee, made up mostly of legislative leaders, that supervises interim studies and handles legislative business between sessions. Its current chairman is Representative Mike Lefor, R-Dickinson, the House majority leader.

Legislators' base pay, daily session pay and compensation for attending interim committee meetings are linked to salary increases for state employees that lawmakers include in the budget for state government.

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