



Obituaries

Val Jean Hettich



Dec. 2, 1930-June 8, 2026

With heavy hearts and deep gratitude for a life beautifully lived, we announce the passing of Val Jean Hettich on Monday, June 8, 2026, at the age of 95. Val was a beloved community member whose legacy of kindness, service, faith, and unconditional love will continue to live on in the hearts of all who knew her.

Val was born on December 2, 1930, in Bloomington, Nebraska, to Blanche (Stafford) and Lawrence Sheets. She was one of seven children and spent her early years alongside five sisters and one brother in a hardworking family that traveled from farm to farm as sharecroppers. Though life was not always easy, those years helped shape Val's strong work ethic, resilience, compassion, and deep appreciation for family.

As a young woman, Val discovered her calling in education. She loved children and believed in the power of learning, encouragement, and kindness. After teaching in Kansas, her family moved to Riverdale, North Dakota, where her father worked as a heavy equipment operator helping build the Garrison Dam. This is also where she met the love of her life, Ben Hettich. Ben was working as a butcher at the Red Owl store in Bowman, and together they began a love story that would span nearly seventy years. They were married on August 11, 1956, building a life centered on family, hard work, and unwavering devotion to one another.

After spending time in Bowman and Riverdale, Val and Ben settled in New Town, North Dakota, where they would raise their family and become beloved members of the community. Val began teaching kindergarten in the basement of the Lakeside Hotel. When she and Ben built their home in 1964, her classroom moved into the basement, opening both her home and her heart to countless young children beginning their educational journeys.

Teaching was never just a job for Val, it was a calling. She had a special gift for making every child feel seen, valued, and capable. After briefly working as a secretary at the local nursing home, she returned to the classroom, where she belonged. She continued teaching kindergarten at New Town Elementary School as a paraprofessional and remained dedicated to the children in her community until 2022, retiring at the remarkable age of 91 to care for her beloved husband, Ben.

Throughout her decades in education, Val touched countless lives. For generations of students, she was their first teacher, their first encourager, and often one of their most cherished childhood memories. Her patience, warmth, and gentle guidance helped shape not only young minds but also kind hearts.

Val and Ben were also proud owners of Ben's Steak and Stein from 1978 to 1996. The restaurant was more than a business, it became a gathering place where friendships were formed, stories were shared, and community connections grew stronger.

Val's faith, friendships, and community involvement were central to her life. She was a devoted member of the United Church of Christ, Bethel Lutheran Church, and Beta Sigma Phi. An avid golfer, she also enjoyed many happy years at Edgewood Golf Course, where she formed lasting friendships and created treasured memories.

Above all else, Val's greatest joy was her family. She was a devoted wife, loving mother, proud grandmother, and adoring great-grandmother. She and Ben raised four children, Ryan, Marci, Lisa, and Royce, and she treasured every moment spent with them. Nothing brought her greater happiness than watching her family grow and celebrating their accomplishments, milestones, and everyday moments together.

Val found joy in life's simple pleasures. She loved tending her garden, spending time on the golf course, and nurturing the children she taught. Whether she was caring for flowers, comforting a student, or spending time with family, she gave her whole heart to everything she did.

She is survived by her sisters, Linda (Larry) Moore and Sheryl Preston; her children, Ryan (Nancy) Hettich, Marci Hettich, Lisa Thelen, and Royce Hettich; fourteen grandchildren; thirteen great-grandchildren, with a fourteenth great-grandchild on the way; and numerous nieces, nephews, former students,

extended family members, and dear friends.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Ben Hettich; her parents, Lawrence and Blanche Sheets; and her siblings, Betty McElderry, Maxine Stammer, Donna Anderson, and Gary Sheets.

Val's life was defined by love - love for her family, her students, her community, and her husband. She spent nearly a century making the world a kinder place through her gentle spirit, generous heart, and unwavering dedication to others. Though she will be deeply missed, her legacy lives on in the generations of children she taught, the family she cherished, and the countless lives she touched along the way.

Her memory will forever be a blessing, and her love will remain in our hearts always.

A memorial service was held on Saturday, June 27, 2026, at Edwin Loe Elementary School Gymnasium, New Town, with inurnment held on Monday, June 29, 2026, at North Dakota Veterans Cemetery, Mandan.

(Langhans Funeral Home, Parshall)

Darlene Rae Bruhn



Nov. 13, 1941-June 19, 2026

Darlene Rae Bruhn, 84, of Palermo, ND passed away on Friday, June 19, 2026, at Mountrail County Medical Center in Stanley, ND.

Darlene Rae (Lindberg) Bruhn was born on November 13, 1941, in Gervis, Oregon to Ray and Dollie Lindberg. She attended Swarz, Spencer #2 in Rural Kenmare, Kenmare Public School through 2nd grade, Granada 110 at Blaisdell ND grades 3 through 8, then graduated from Stanley High School in May of 1960.

She married Lawrence Bruhn on June 2nd, 1960, at the Nazareth Lutheran Church in Kenmare, North Dakota. Together they had five children, seventeen grandchildren, twenty-one great-grandchildren, and four great-great-grandchildren.

Darlene and Lawrence rented/lived at the Leonard Anderson farm until May 1968 until they purchased the John and Lena Rock Homestead where they eventually built a home and raised their family. In 1985 the family home was struck by lightning and started on fire. The home was destroyed but Darlene and Lawrence remodeled the basement of the home and lived there until 1997. In 1997 they moved to Palermo where they lived until October of 2019 when they moved to Stanley, then in September of 2022 moved to Ellison Assisted Living in Minot. After Lawrence passed, Darlene enjoyed living at The View in Minot until her death.

Darlene was a member of Faith Lutheran Church in Palermo where she held many positions over the years. She was on Church Council, WELCA President and Mission Action Growth and Community, AAL and Thrivent Congregation Coordinator, taught Sunday School and Bible School during the time their children attended; and served as Prairie Lutheran Parish Intern Committee representing Faith Lutheran in Palermo.

She was the Palermo Local Farmers Union youth leader for 25 years and the Mountrail County Farmers Union youth director for 5 1/2 years. Other organizations and positions she was part of were the Frisky Fifteen Homemakers in Blaisdell, The Get Together Club in Palermo and the Golden Age Club Secretary in Stanley.

During her high school years, she worked for Lloyd and Caroline Jones, and her aunt and uncle Altha and Herman Landers. She also worked in Stanley at Lee's Hardware, Farmers Union Oil Station, and the Taster Freeze.

In the later 70's she wrote bulletins for the church once per week at the Parsonage office in Palermo. She was the Township Assessor of McGahan Township for twelve years and Election Inspector for Mountrail County for 23 years.

Darlene was very well known throughout the area for decorating cakes. She baked and decorated large wedding cakes, and many cakes for anniversaries, birthdays, and special occasions out of her home for 35 years.

Darlene also did the bookkeeping for Red's Drywall, LDMHP, and the farm.

She was a collector of many things, but her carousel collection was her favorite. She has requested NO flowers at her service, only to display her carousels.

In lieu of flowers, she would like to have memorial contributions made to youth camps or organizations, Faith Lutheran Church or Farmers Union youth affiliated pro-

grams.

Darlene is survived by her daughter, LaRinda Bruhn (Kyle Schmidt), Minot ND; sons, Jerimie (Nikki) Bruhn, Greg (Muriel) Bruhn, Blaisdell, ND, Jeff Bruhn, Rock Lake, ND; grandchildren, Sayge (Madison) Weigel, Sienna Weigel, Mitchell Bruhn, Kayla (Matt) Mans, Jessica (Wesley) Cervantes, Colton Bruhn (Xavier Sotelo), Nicholas Bruhn, Lakyn (Colton) Rudolph, Jarvis Bruhn (Kailee Koenen), Jhonda Bruhn (Dave Hoffmeyer), Joshua (Kelli) Bruhn, Layton Bruhn (Coty Groves), Ryder Bruhn, Matthew Warnke, Joseph Bruhn (Tara McLaughlin), Jacob (Shayla) Bruhn, Zachary Bruhn (Lauren Christopher); great-grandchildren, Dayne Bruhn-Glaholt, Alexis Bruhn, Jace Azure, Kadence Bruhn, Amari Hall, Dominic Patterson, Shane Bruhn, Addlyn Bruhn, Waylon Bruhn, Kianna Bruhn, Sienna McLaughlin, Trenton Bruhn, Trenidi Bruhn, Tatelynn Bruhn, Bailey Rudolph, Myles Mans, Francisco Cisneros Jr, Gianna Cervantes, Sophia Bruhn, Ruthann McLaughlin, Mitchell Warnke, Hunter (Takota) Barkley; great-great-grandchildren, Aubrie Warnke, Madilyn Barkley, Kohen Barkley, Adrienne Barkley; sisters, Geanie (Dale) Wassmann, Absarokee MT, and Janice (Billy) Greenlee, Tagus, ND; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

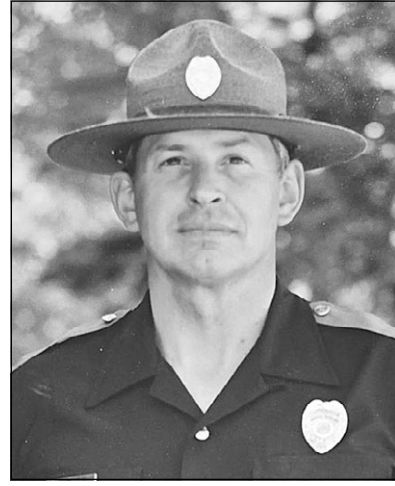
Darlene was preceded in death by her husband, Lawrence Bruhn; son, Bradley Bruhn; daughter-in-law, Debbie Lee; parents, Ray and Dollie Lindberg.

Darlene's memorial service will be held on Friday, July 10, 2026 at 11:30 a.m. at the Faith Lutheran Church in Palermo, ND. Iva Fox will officiate. Honoring her wishes, she has donated her body to The University of North Dakota School of Medicine.

The memorial service will be recorded and uploaded, you can view Darlene's service directly on her obituary page on the website www.springan Stevenson.com.

Springan Stevenson Funeral Home of Stanley have been entrusted with arrangements and services. Friends may sign the on-line register and give their condolences

Roger A. Haga



Jan. 22, 1946-June 19, 2026

Roger A. Haga, 80, Valley City, ND, passed away June 19, 2026, at Altru Hospital in Grand Forks, ND.

Roger Allan Haga was born January 22, 1946, in Northwood, ND, to Peder A. and E. Helen (Hurst) Haga, Jr. He graduated from the Northwood High School class of 1964 and went on to NDSU where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Zoology. He served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam Era working as a med/surg tech.

Roger's career was spent with the ND Highway Patrol where he was first assigned to New Rockford. He went on to patrol in Stanley and eventually Valley City where he retired. He decided to try welding in his retirement years. He was a welder at GLJ Welding in Milnor and Sheyenne Tooling in Cooperstown.

His love of music was centered mainly around piano, classical, and opera. He enjoyed reading and was a historian that focused on Lewis and Clark. Roger was an avid shooter, competing in firearms and bow competitions. Roger enjoyed the outdoors. "Not all who wander are lost." Canoeing, fishing, bird watching, football (Go Bison), hockey, and the Cleveland Indians baseball. He had a new sports interest when nephew, Miles and his daughter, Marion were in curling competitions on YouTube. He loved all his nieces and nephews. His dog Roid was a faithful companion as was his cat Tudy.

Roger was a member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Valley City and regularly attended Bible study. One of the many Bibles in his collection is the one he carried with him while in Vietnam. He also belonged to Sons of Norway.

He is survived by his sisters, Jean (Pat) Krueger of Brainerd, MN, Lois (Jan) Robson of DeLeau, MB, Canada, and Luann (Jerry) Brooks of McVillie, ND; as well as several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; a sister and brother-in-law, Janice (John) Lee; and a nephew, Joe Brooks.

Visitation will be held at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Valley City, on Wednesday, July 1 from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. with a prayer service beginning at 7:00 p.m. The funeral service will be in the church on Thursday, July 2, at 9:30 a.m. He will be laid to rest in the Fargo National Cemetery, Harwood, ND.

Traditions Funeral Services in Valley City is assisting Roger's fam-

ily with arrangements. The service will be live streamed, then archived, on a link provided along with his obituary on his tribute page at www.olivernathanchapel.com. An online guestbook is available there as well.

Diana Lois (Metzler) Niemitalo



Dec. 1, 1937-June 22, 2026

Our beloved mother, Diana Lois (Metzler) Niemitalo, 88, passed away Monday, June 22, 2026, with her daughters at her side at the Mountrail Bethel Home in Stanley, ND.

Diana was born December 1, 1937, in Minneapolis, MN. Her parents, Harry and Tracie Metzler, raised Diana and her siblings on the family farm located a mile south of Hwy 1804 on the Mountrail-Williams County Line. Diana loved horses; when the family went to town she always chose to stay home and get her chores done so she could ride her horses, Babe and Blaze. Diana deeply loved and respected her parents, talking often about her happy, wonderful childhood.

Diana started her school years in Manitowish, ND, living with her teacher during the school week. By her third year of school there were enough children closer to her home for a country school. Diana started high school in Old Sanish, ND, where she boarded with a family; she finished high school in New Town, ND.

On May 3, 1958, Diana married Lars Niemitalo. They had seven children in nine years. They later divorced. Diana raised their seven children alone.

When Diana's youngest child started school, she went to work at Mountrail Bethel Home where she worked for over 30 years. While Diana herself was in Mountrail Bethel Home for the past two years we heard many stories from people who had worked with her about her incredible work ethic, witty sense of humor and kindness towards the residents. She also worked at nursing homes in New Town, Kenmare and Parshall, and lastly as a traveling nurse's aide. Diana loved the traveling part and the many wonderful friends she met along the way. After retiring she volunteered at Tri City Thrift Store in Stanley until Covid hit. Diana was 82.

Diana espoused a life of morality, hard work and focus on others. She was always available to help her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Diana loved and was gentle and kind to children, the elderly, and all animals, with a special love for horses and dogs. She loved reading, especially cookbooks, holistic health books, and books of faith. Diana firmly believed that diet played a vital role in health. One of the many ways she will be remembered is through the legendary, comforting foods she cooked and baked for her family and friends. Diana loved good, strong coffee which she drank all day and into the evening. It never kept her awake.

Diana was preceded in death by her parents, Harry and Tracie Metzler; her brother, Harold Metzler; her sister, Margo Niemitalo; her daughter, Aleta Sveen; and her son, Morgan Niemitalo.

She is survived by her daughters, Sonya Halvorson, Shawn (Dan) Walter, Julie Niemitalo and Rachel (Tom) Lonier; and her son, Jett Niemitalo; her grandchildren, Allyn (Chad) Rolfe, Somer (Shane) Halvorson, Gwen (Jerry) Norton, Ana Blake, Mikala Cantero, Shylene (Michael) Parks, Kassandra (Joel) Norton, Kelcie Norton Lee, Jarvis Bruhn, Jhonda Bruhn, Josh (Kelli) Bruhn, Beth Seidel, Madelyn Niemitalo, Ryann Niemitalo, Emmeriah Lonier, Hannah Niemitalo and Olivia (Ryan) Higgins; her great-grandchildren, Shadoc (Trevor) Almer, Gabrielle (Caleb) Rolfe, Nate Ryan, Jasmine (Andrew) Olson, Abigail Olson, Delbert Blake, Kaden Parks, Arianna Davis, Parker Lee, Blake Borchering, Joseph Vazquez, Dayne Bruhn-Glaholt, Alexis Bruhn, Jace Bruhn-Azure, Kadence Bruhn, Amari Hall, Mavis Conley, Iris Higgins and Cedar Higgins; and her great-great-grandchildren, Beau Almer, Lena Almer and Eve Salinas.

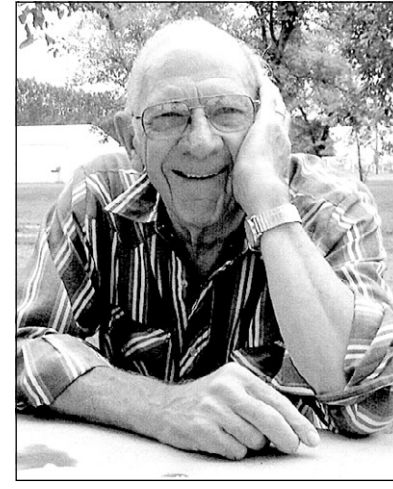
Diana's funeral service was held on Monday, June 29, 2026, at the First Baptist Church in Stanley, ND. Pastor Ed Holland officiated. Diana was laid to rest at the Belden Finnish Cemetery in Belden, ND.

The funeral service was recorded and uploaded, you can view Diana's service directly on her obituary page on the website www.springan Stevenson.com.

Springan Stevenson Funeral Home of Stanley have been entrusted with arrangements and services. Friends may sign the on-line register

and give their condolences at www.springan Stevenson.com.

Raymond Ellingson Spalla



Apr. 6, 1935-June 24, 2026

Raymond Ellingson Spalla, 91, passed away peacefully with his loving wife at his side, on June 24, 2026, at Trinity Hospital, Minot.

Ray was born on April 6, 1935, at Trinity Hospital, Minot, ND to Raymond and Evelyn (Ellingson) Spalla. He was raised in the Plaza-Parshall area and graduated from Rugby High School.

Ray managed Temple for a time, later purchasing the Jolly Fisherman Family Resort. He and his wife Marion Spalla (Telehey) enjoyed taking trips in their motor home and meeting up with old friends and making new ones. Ray enjoyed keeping busy tinkering, fixing or building. Ideally, that would be followed with pizza and a big brownie!

Ray will certainly be missed.

The family would like to extend their deep appreciation to the staff of Edgewood Tenth and to the staff of Trinity Hospital for their kindness and care during Ray's stay at the hospital.

Ray's funeral service was held on Monday, June 29, 2026, in the chapel of Thompson Larson Funeral Home. Visitation was held prior to services in the chapel.

Interment was held in Rose Hill Memorial Park Cemetery.

Memorials requested to a Charity of your choice.

Betty Grubb

Betty Grubb, 95, of Stanley, ND (formerly of Tioga, ND), passed away on Monday, June 22, 2026, at the Mountrail Bethel Home in Stanley, ND. Springan Stevenson Funeral Home of Stanley is assisting the family. Condolences may be left on the funeral home website at www.springan Stevenson.com.

William Wilson

William Wilson, 38, Las Vegas, NV, formerly of New Town, died Wednesday, June 17, 2026, in Las Vegas.

(Langhans Funeral Home, Parshall)

Marleen Weflen

Marleen Weflen, 77, Mesa, AZ, formerly of New Town, died Wednesday, June 17, 2026, in Mesa.

(Langhans Funeral Home, Parshall)

Senate Postal Hearing Reveals Need For Publisher Engagement

Prior to the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee hearing on USPS reform hearing, the National Newspaper Association submitted a statement to the committee and met with committee staff to share concerns about rising postal costs, declining service performance, and the impact these issues are having on community newspapers and the customers who rely on them. Unfortunately, many of those concerns received little attention during the proceeding.

Committee Chairman Rand Paul (R-KY) outlined a vision for USPS that would rely heavily on higher postage rates, reduced delivery frequency, and a diminished role for the Postal Service in the nation's communications infrastructure. While intended to address USPS financial challenges, proposals such as significantly increasing postage rates and reducing service to four days per week would raise serious concerns for mail users, including newspapers, small businesses, and rural communities.

Members of the minority focused much of their attention on election mail issues and proposed USPS responses to recent executive actions, while spending less time discussing the long-term structural and financial challenges facing the organization. Meanwhile, several senators raised concerns about ongoing service problems in their states, reflecting frustrations that are shared by postal customers across the country.

One of the more notable exchanges came from Senator Josh Hawley (R-MO), who pressed USPS leadership about severe mail service problems in the St. Louis area. While the challenges in St. Louis may be among the most visible in the nation, the concerns he raised echoed complaints heard from communities across the country. Delayed deliveries, inconsistent service, and customer frustration are not isolated incidents - they are symptoms of broader operational issues that con-

tinue to undermine confidence in the Postal Service.

Postmaster General David Steiner faced difficult questions regarding both service performance and USPS finances. While he emphasized the importance of the mailing industry to the American economy, committee members appeared unconvinced by many of his responses. Questions about labor costs, service reliability, and specific operational challenges often produced answers that did little to reassure lawmakers that USPS has a clear path forward. Particularly concerning was his apparent lack of preparation for questions regarding the well-documented service problems in St. Louis, which left committee members dissatisfied and reinforced concerns about USPS management's understanding of local service failures.

Perhaps the most concerning takeaway from the hearing was the lack of consensus on solutions. Members expressed frustration with USPS performance, but there was little agreement on how to improve service while maintaining affordability and financial sustainability. The result was a hearing that generated more questions than answers about the future direction of postal policy.

NNA remains committed to working with Congress, USPS leadership, and regulators to advance practical solutions that protect the nation's mail system and the communities it serves. Community newspapers depend on a Postal Service that delivers reliable service at reasonable rates, and Americans deserve a system that is accountable to the public.

We encourage newspaper publishers, readers, and all postal customers to contact their U.S. Senators and urge them to support policies that ensure the Postal Service remains accountable, accessible, and affordable for the communities and businesses that depend on it every day.

NOTICE - CITY OF STANLEY WATER QUALITY REPORT

The 2025 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report was published in the Mountrail County Promoter June 24, 2026. The report will not be mailed out. If you would like to obtain a copy, contact the City Auditor's Office at (701)628-2225 or stop by City Hall at 221 S. Main Street Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Copies will also be available at the City Library 116 S Main Street.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING - STANLEY RESIDENTS CONSIDERATION OF FENCE ORDINANCE REVISION

There will be a public hearing held on Monday July 13, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at the Stanley City Hall located at 221 South Main Street Stanley, ND, for the purpose of taking comments on the possibility of revising the setback portion of the Fence Ordinance. The Planning & Zoning Commission requests your presence and input before moving forth on any action regarding the possible revision of the fence ordinance.

Dated this 10th day of June 2026.

Amanda Dennis, Planning & Zoning Administrator