

He left to catch a train and never returned

When I lived with my grandmother Carrie, she was the stereotypical grandmother of the 1950s, not concerned with her hair color, eye color or the color of her shoes. She wore the first dress she pulled out of her closet.

I loved my grandmother like only a young boy can love a grandparent. Her role in my life, I knew at a very young age, was irreplaceable. I grew to know her love for me was one of unconditional affection.

Little did we – my two sisters and myself – know of Carrie's previous life, other than she immigrated from Norway to Halifax, Nova Scotia, on Canada's eastern seaboard. Sick the entire sea journey across the Atlantic Ocean and cared for by her older sister – Carrie was but a child when taken by train to Winnipeg, where she and her sister were kept by a farmer who trafficked in immigrant children, until the two girls were discovered to be in Winnipeg by their mother and brothers. A good neighbor drove his horse-drawn wagon to Winnipeg and brought Carrie and

her sister home to Greenbush, Minnesota.

Carrie grew up in a townsite outside Greenbush. There, she met Christ Hamnes, who seemingly appeared out of nowhere in the north woods after being unheard from for four years. The handsome young stranger proposed to my grandmother.

Years of deep fears, uncertainty and sadness followed Carrie after her marriage.

Her husband, who claimed to be a mason, was seldom home, claiming he had work far from home. When he returned home, he had little money, was drinking and never stayed home long.

With two young boys and pregnant with my mother, Carrie was taken by her husband to Warroad, Minnesota, where they lived in an apartment over a saloon.

Her husband soon left his family again, but not before Carrie said, "You best not be gone long."

Days later and minutes from giving birth, Carrie said she "prayed to God" and there her husband was standing in the doorway, accompanied by a nurse.

The new father soon left town, but the nurse stayed with Carrie for 10 days.

An angel of mercy, Grandmother often described the woman.

Living in a small village on the North Dakota side of the Red River two years later, Carrie and her three children watched their husband and father leave for Donaldson, on the Minnesota side of the Red.

He was catching a train, he said, for work in northern Minnesota.

Christ Hamnes never returned home. Or to his family.

Only recently did we learn from a cousin's daughter who discovered a newspaper microfilm page of the Kennedy, Minnesota, weekly newspaper that told of a body found alongside the railroad tracks outside Stephen, Minnesota, around the same time that our grandfather left to catch a train.

News of the incident never reached Carrie or her family.

According to the 1915 Kennedy Star, the



NEIL O. NELSON

dead man's body, bruised and bleeding and "still warm" when discovered, was never identified. Nothing was found in the man's pockets except a toothbrush wrapped in a small piece of a Crookston Daily Times newspaper page and a C.V.R. laundry mark.

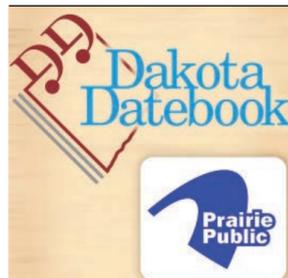
Wounds on the body of the dead man were described to be a "deep cut in the forehead and one on the back of the head," according to the Kennedy newspaper

We suspect our grandfather was beaten to death and pushed from the speeding Winnipeg Flyer passenger train. Marshall County authorities alluded to the possibility.

Carrie, our dear grandmother, opened and operated three restaurants while raising three children, later remarried and lived to age 99.

She died never knowing what happened to Christ Hamnes.

She had long since stopped caring.



"Dakota Datebook" is a radio series from Prairie Public in partnership with the State Historical Society of North Dakota and with funding from the North Dakota Humanities Council. See all the Dakota Datebooks at prairiepublic.org, subscribe to the "Dakota Datebook" podcast, or buy the Dakota Datebook book at shopprairiepublic.org.

Town Criers

by Sarah Walker

March 12, 2026 – It's a "flock" of geese and a "murder" of crows, but what do you call a large group of town criers? On this date in 1929, the Park Hotel in Killdeer was full of them!

They had gathered in Killdeer for their regular Town Criers meeting. The Killdeer Herald reported that it "was a capacity affair. Thirty-five persons were recorded in attendance."

The town criers enjoyed a meal, after which the chairman called the meeting to order. Part of the order of business was to discuss what they had accomplished. The newspaper reported, "As the last word, Haakon Weydahl, in his usual vivid way, portrayed their activities in military parlance, which took in every maneuver from the breakfast bugle of the morning after to the zero hour of the night before. As a climax, he decorated them with a specially prepared ribbon from each of which was suspended a five dollar gold piece."

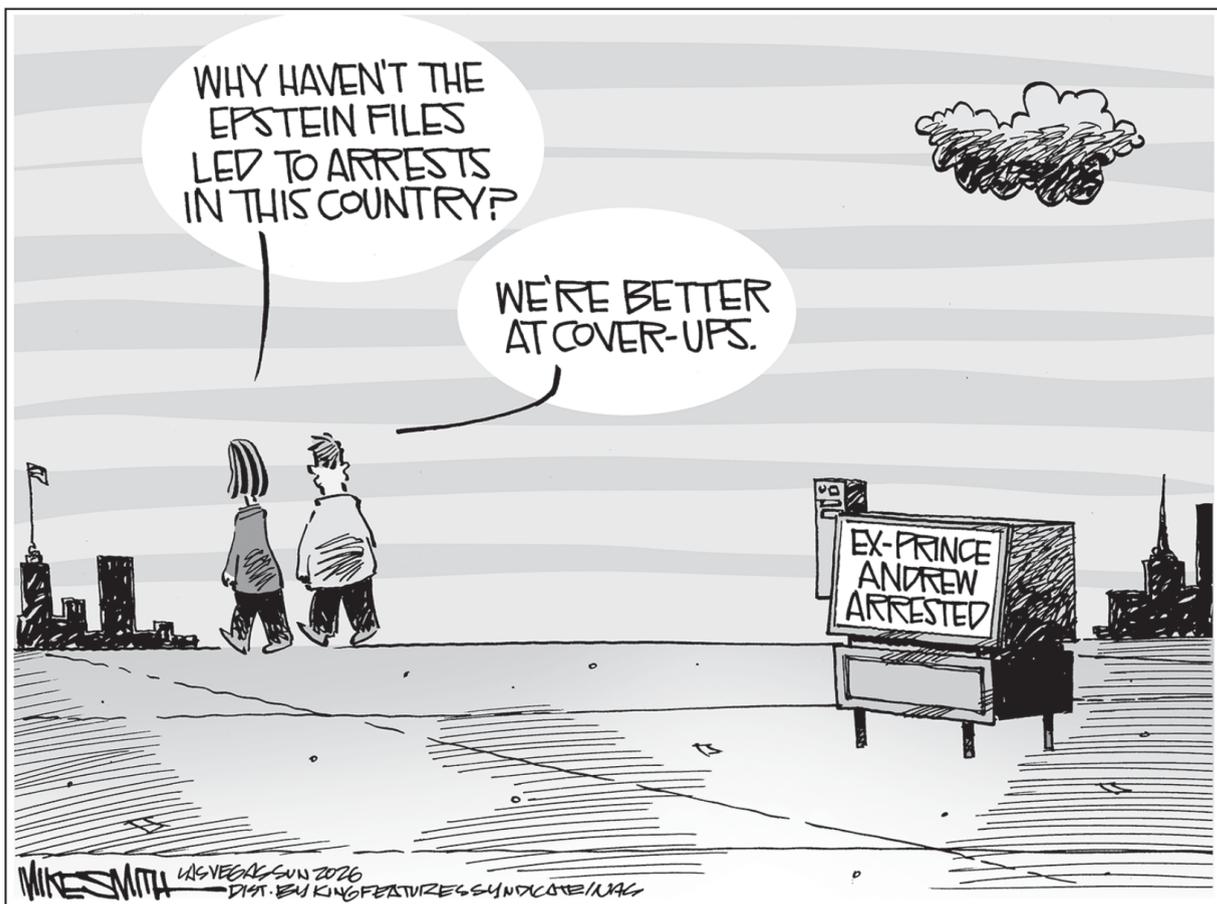
After the business of the meeting was over, the town criers went to the Odd Fellow Hall in the Killdeer Hotel building, where they played whist, sang, and enjoyed themselves. Their number increased as people around town, including "many who were weather-bound in town overnight"—at least that was their excuse.

The newspaper stated, "Somewhere, long ago, a sad-faced poet who never 'convived' with his friends and acquaintances uttered the following: 'Backward, turn backward, O time in thy flight, and make me a child again just for tonight.' That gem of thought confessing the accumulated stagnation of years gone by and expressing a yearning for things that were forever gone, would have never graced the crown of literature if the discouraged old poet had ever attended a party with the Killdeer town Criers."

There are official town crier positions in some cities today, though none in North Dakota. Still, one can imagine the echo of the group of men, cheering each other, and perhaps even exclaiming out loud, "Hear ye, Hear ye!"

Herald-Press
Subscriptions
701-324-4646
or visit our website
heraldpressnd.com

WE WELCOME YOUR OPINIONS.
Send letters to the editor to: heraldpress@midconetwork.com
We review all submissions but cannot publish everything.
Please include your name, signature, and phone number.



Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

As a Marine Veteran of the Vietnam War, I have a brief message:

We are all aware of what is taking place in the Middle East. You can agree or disagree, but remember, IT'S STILL OUR COUNTRY! Right or wrong! At this moment, American service men and women are dying, to protect what our

flag stands for. There is no political affiliation on their dog tags; THEY DON'T GET A VOTE! They do their duty without praise or unanimous support. Veteran Cemeteries ought to remind civilians as well as politicians and generals; that war should never be entered lightly, but rather, as a last resort. Veteran Cemeteries around the country should remind us that the true cost of freedom is not free! It has always been paid, not with cash, but with blood. I ask that you pray for our military men and women.

SEMPER FI

Don Muscha
Fessenden, ND

North Dakota gives thumbs up to 'You betcha' voting sticker

By Michael Achterling
NORTH DAKOTA MONITOR
About 2 million new "I voted" stickers are on their way to North Dakota after a Bottineau election official's design was selected as the winner of the state's election sticker design contest.

Haylee Senger, deputy auditor of Bottineau County, said her "You betcha, I voted" design was inspired by a Midwestern-themed sticker that said "Ope."

"Then I got designing, and it kind of came to life," Senger said. "I just thought it would be fun."

Secretary of State Michael Howe unveiled the new sticker Thursday at the Heritage Center in Bismarck during a conference for North Dakota election officials.

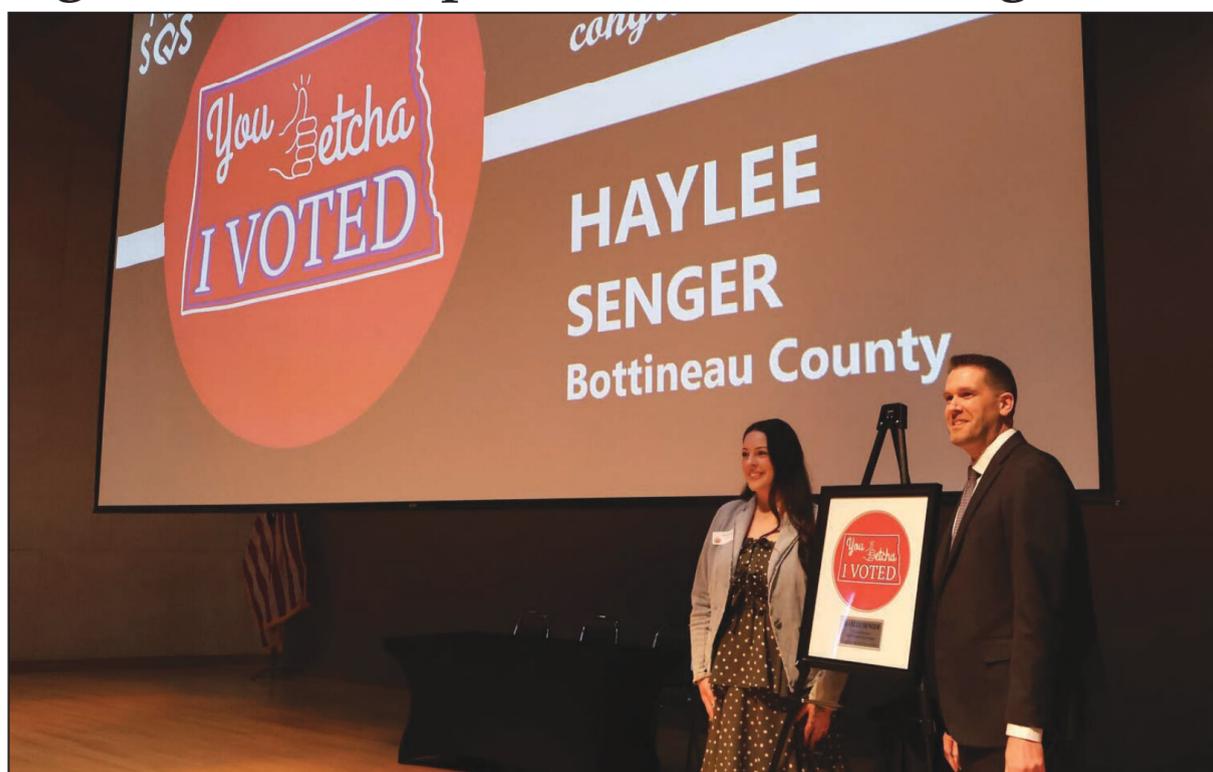
"An 'I voted' sticker, it's a proclamation that you've had your voice heard, that you care about your community and it is a point of civic pride," Howe said.

Howe's office received 478 sticker entries from 72 North Dakota communities. Designers ranged in age from kindergarten students to grandparents. Five finalists were selected, and North Dakotans were able to vote for their favorite design in January, Howe said.

Gov. Kelly Armstrong spoke during the conference and told state election officials that even though Republicans and Democrats have different ideas on how to preserve election integrity, they can both agree that North Dakota runs its elections well, which was a testament to everyone in the auditorium.

"The vast, vast majority of the silent majority of North Dakotans are proud of how our elections are run," Armstrong said. "I trust our elections in North Dakota."

For example, Armstrong said North Dakota was one of 24 states during the 2024 election cycle where less than 10% of in-person voters on



Haylee Senger, left, of Bottineau, stands next to North Dakota Secretary of State Michael Howe and her winning "I Voted" sticker design at the Heritage Center in Bismarck on March 5, 2026. (Photo by Michael Achterling/North Dakota Monitor)

Election Day needed to wait in line for longer than 30 minutes.

The new "You betcha, I voted" stickers will be available during the 2026 primary and general elections with the leftover stickers being used in future elections until the supplies run out.

North Dakota Monitor reporter Michael Achterling can be reached at machterling@northdakotamonitor.com.

Contact Us With Your 2026 Building Plans!
Jump start the 2026 building season by calling or emailing Century Builders
You'll appreciate the depth of experience our professionals bring to your project from design to completion.
Plus, our initial layout drawings and cost estimates are free!

■ Commercial ■ Shops ■ Sheds ■ Livestock Barns ■ Shouses

Call Now: 701-371-6604
CENTURY BUILDERS
YOUR STEEL & POST FRAME PROFESSIONALS
info@centurybuildersnd.com | www.centurybuildersnd.com

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin
Oh, most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, fruitful vine, splendour of Heaven. Blessed Mother of the Son of God; Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh, Star of the Sea, help me and show me. Oh, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succour me in my necessity (Make request). There are none that can withstand your power.
Oh, Mary, conceived without sin,
pray for us who have recourse to thee. (3 times)
Holy Mary, I place this prayer in your hands. (3 times)
Say this prayer for three consecutive days and then you must publish and it will be granted to you in full. Thanks