



Snow Geese at Tewaukon
By Jack Dura

March 23, 2026 – North Dakota is a popular stopover for migrating waterfowl. Even endangered whooping cranes make a pit stop here, but the migrating snow geese at Lake Tewaukon are one of the most impressive sights. They'd give Alfred Hitchcock's movie "The Birds" a run for its money. The little lake and the sky above it become a cloud of white as hundreds of thousands of snow geese swirl and swim. The geese flock to Lake Tewaukon in March, usually around this time of year, at times totaling over seven hundred thousand birds.

The snow geese migration also marks the start of movement for other waterfowl. Ducks, Giant Canada geese, and teal show up at Tewaukon in early April, with shorebirds like sandpipers and plovers arriving in May. Bald eagles and great horned owls also nest in the area.

The snow geese's journey from wintering in southern Texas to their breeding grounds in Nunavut Territory, Canada is over 3,000 miles. Stops along the way might include cornfields near Urbana, Illinois, sloughs near Cleveland, and the ditches along I-94 – small wetlands that are some of the first bodies of water to warm up in spring. In North Dakota, they enjoy a paradise provided by the state's prairie potholes.

Lake Tewaukon is part of the Tewaukon National Wildlife Refuge. This hotspot for naturalists offers another spectacle in May and June, when it features a chorus of wildflowers.

Cold War Education
By Lane Sunwall

March 24, 2026 – To some, the Cold War carried the specter of nuclear Armageddon, the end of life as we know it. While humanity dodged that particular bullet, efforts to build more effective bombs spurred both American and Russian intellectual curiosity and scientific prowess. The "space race," the other epic mid-century contest between the US and the USSR, was intimately tied to nuclear-arms development. Indeed, the first rockets to send men into space were converted warfare missiles.

Even before 1957, when the launch of Sputnik caught the United States off-guard, the US government knew that if it were to retain the edge in military technology, it needed to improve American science. Towards that end, the government made massive investments in scientific research and education. The result put America on the moon, but perhaps of greater importance was the modern scientific revolution that the investment in scientific study made possible.

Not everyone who was involved with the government's "space-race" education initiative became rocket-scientists. Many branched off into other sciences and provided America with a myriad of inventions we now take for granted. North Dakota was intimately tied to this renaissance in American ingenuity.

As funding to the universities increased, citizens across the state took up the challenge to advance American technological innovation.

In the Fall of 1956, a young Bill Isaacson enrolled in the pre-engineering program at Minot State University. The program, part of the government's scientific initiative, propelled Mr. Isaacson to Montana State University and to a doctorate of engineering in 1963. Isaacson launched his career at 3M. Combining his expertise with his inborn business acumen, Isaacson played an important role in the invention of multi-focal permanent contact lenses, a new generation of Olympic diving boards, and even 3M's most ubiquitous product, the "Post-it" note.

Bill Isaacson has neither forgotten his home state, nor the difference his education played in his life. This week in 2011, Isaacson travelled back to his alma mater, Minot State University, to speak to aspiring inventors, scientists, and entrepreneurs. His purpose: inspire a new generation of North Dakotans to push the boundaries of science to bring the newest technologies to market, applying their knowledge towards a better tomorrow.

Weather History
By Sarah Walker

March 25, 2026 – Avid fans of weather history may recall that in mid-March of 1941, a blizzard swept across the upper Midwest, reaping death in its wake. Out of more than 70 victims, at least 35 fell in North Dakota.

Reports of the dead and the close calls flew everywhere. The Northwestern Bell Telephone Company in Fargo reported that 2500 long-distance calls were placed following the blizzard—the greatest number of long distance calls placed in a single day in the history of the office.

On this date, only ten days after the storm, North Dakotans were trying to deal with what had occurred.

In Devils Lake, hundreds of motorists were marooned in their cars overnight. In Grand Forks, at least eleven people were still listed as missing two days after the storm. Near Fort Ransom, a father and son froze to death while out walking. Two cousins near Hannah died while walking home from a 4H Club meeting.

The Weiner family, from near Langdon, had just arrived at their farm home when the storm broke. Their driveway was blocked, so they parked along the highway, but upon opening the car door, the oldest daughter was swept away by the wind. By the time her parents caught up with her, they were all lost. They did eventually bump into a fence post that Mr. Weiner recognized as his own. He left his family behind and followed the fence to his sheep shed. He returned, but his wife was unable to move, so he took his daughter and young son to the shed, then returned once more and half-dragged, half-carried his wife to safety.

Four brothers from near Dazey, aged seventeen and younger, had been out roller skating, and on the way home were caught in the storm. Donald, Lee and Dickie perished. Only "Bobbie" Taylor survived—and only because his twin brother Dickie had been holding him in the snowdrift in which they had sought shelter.

Bobbie was in the hospital for

a while. He lost his left foot and the toes and heel of his right foot. However, he kept a good attitude, telling his nurse, "I don't think I will be able to play football because of my feet, but I think I will make it alright in basketball."

The reports of the Taylor family tragedy spread far and wide, and Bobbie unexpectedly received an autographed photo from movie star Robert Taylor—written on the photo was "To Robert Taylor from Robert Taylor. Best wishes."

Spuds' Day of Firsts
By Merry Helm

March 26, 2026 – It was a day of firsts across the river in Moorhead, Minnesota. As reported on this date in 1928, Moorhead High had won its first major sports title by taking the 16th Annual Minnesota high school basketball championship. They beat a Minneapolis team, the Edison Inventors, before a record-breaking crowd of 7,200 spectators in the U of M Fieldhouse.

A reporter wrote, "In the championship game, Edison's vaunted passing play, which baffled Northfield Friday, was no puzzle to the Moorhead Spudders after they got going in the second quarter.

"Moorhead, which has made frequent appearances in the state tournament as representatives of their section, used a cautious slow approach in invading the Edison's territory, but once past the middle of the floor, they uncorked clever passes and some accurate shooting that brought them into favor with a majority of the rooters that were from outside the home city of the Inventors."

Moorhead fans showed up

in droves to welcome home their young heroes. Newspapers reported, "From the moment Clifford Halmrast, doughty captain and all-state forward, alighted from the train bearing the championship trophy, until a monster mass meeting was called to order in the high school auditorium, the cheers of the rooters, the blare of the bands, and the shrill cries of the [factory] whistles and [fire] sirens predominated. The victorious players and their coach, Glenn Hanna, were loaded on a fire truck with prominent city officials and were paraded through the main streets of the city."

Halmrast scored 20 points – the most in any championship round between 1922 and 1944. Both he and guard Earl Moran were selected by newspapermen and officials for the Minnesota all-state team. Moran didn't know it at the time, but he was way to becoming the first player to make all-state three times.

The Spuds won the state final again the following year - the first team in Minnesota history to win back-to-back championships. They hoped to make it three in a row the following year, but one of their players, all-state forward Pat Hilde, had just turned 20, making him ineligible.

Moran and teammate Carroll "Shorty" Malvey were the only Minnesota players to get to three state finals prior to 1971. After graduating, Pat Hilde, Earl Moran and Shorty Malvey enrolled at Concordia, in Moorhead, where they continued to make basketball history by leading that college to its first Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Title. All three teammates made all-state

again – this time at college level.

By the way, the final score in that first state championship game played by Moorhead in 1928 was pretty low by today's standard: The Spuds, 29. The Edison Inventors, 16!

Pig Lady of Hollywood
By Sarah Walker

March 27, 2026 – Edith Hughes was a big city, little city girl. She was born as Edith Wakeman in New York state, but she was raised in Bismarck. When she was older, in 1930, she took her parents to California, and they made their home in Los Angeles. Until 1941, she made it her custom to visit her home city at least once a year.

In the early 1940s, however, Edith began to lose her sight. One Easter Sunday before World War II began, she described her worsening vision as the way the stage looks "when they lower a gauze curtain between the scene and the audience." Her condition grew worse, and all the doctors she went to disagreed on a solution.

But she was a go-getter, and after Pearl Harbor, she reported to a volunteer agency to offer her services. Sightless or not, she was determined to help as best she could. She proposed collecting small donations from people. The director of the agency did not go for the idea, but Edith persisted on her own. Her charitable efforts focused on the issue of blindness, in hopes that the war would improve medical knowledge in that area. Later, she said, "I humiliated everybody by starting a penny a day campaign." She chose the slogan, "A penny a day drives the darkness away."

Her vision continued to worsen, but she turned her energy to other worthwhile causes. Soon, she began circulating Mexican piggy banks to collect funds for the Braille Institute. But she wanted a better design, so she bought a live pig (for ten dollars) and commissioned a sculpture of a life-size pig seated on a pedestal, its front hooves folded in a porcelain plea for funds. She christened this statue "Aurora, goddess of dawn and foe of darkness." This new, large piggy bank was placed in the Los Angeles Farmers' Market, to make its plea to the thousands of people who passed through the gates daily.

She was known as "the pig lady of Hollywood," and for good reason; she pushed people to donate their pennies to her piggy banks.

On this date in 1950, it was reported that Edith Wakeman Hughes was blind no longer. She had undergone surgery by a San Francisco surgeon who restored her sight. She could now see!

Nonetheless, even in its absence, her blindness inspired her, and she continued to push forward and even increase her efforts. This "pig lady" was a business woman and a humanitarian, a go-getter and an inspiration.

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