

NORTHERN VIEW



CHUCK HAGA
Columnist

Spirit Lake foster parents charged with murder

By Matt Henson
Forum News Service

FARGO — A grand jury has indicted Erich and Tammy Longie on a first-degree murder charge following the death of a foster child they were caring for.

“It’s jarring to go through that evidence,” said North Dakota U.S. Attorney Drew Wrigley



Erich and Tammy Longie

as he described the five-page indictment that shed new light on the

death of five-year-old Raven Thompson.

Previously released court papers described the girl as lifeless in the days leading up to her death.

“We are alleging an ongoing course of conduct,” Wrigley said.

The indictment paperwork suggests the abuse started shortly after Raven was placed in the Longie

home by Spirit Lake Social Services last July. An FBI agent testified Raven had injuries all over her body.

While it’s not exactly clear what happened to her, the indictment includes information regarding the alleged abuse of her 7-year-old brother Zane, who was also living in the home.

Prosecutors allege he

was hit with hands, shoes, sticks and a paddle, and that other children were also kicked in the home.

“Young children, who are largely incapable of defending themselves,” are being hurt by people who have been trusted to care for them. Wrigley commented.

MURDER: Page B4

A scientist, explorer and optimist

Wary of tough news and weeks of home confinement, Bob and Nikki Seabloom took a day trip recently to Itasca State Park in northwestern Minnesota. The Pine Ridge and Bear Paw campgrounds weren’t open for overnight stays yet, and the historic Douglas Lodge was still closed: no blueberry pie, no wild rice soup. But the park was there, the trails through the pines, the lakes – and the animals.

“We saw a bear, a big one, just wandering down the main park drive, not far from the campgrounds,” Bob said. “It was in no hurry. I suppose with not many people around, it felt it could go wherever it wanted, undisturbed.”

Life goes on, they say, despite a public health crisis and social tumult. And life in a university town includes scholarship.

Seabloom, 87, is a scientist. He is happy in the field, where he can hear and see and study – mammals, especially. Professor emeritus of biology at UND, he taught various wildlife courses for 35 years. The second edition of his 2011 book, “The Mammals of North Dakota,” was published this year by the North Dakota State University Press. The Herald’s Brad Dokken provided a review in February.

The Seablooms usually get to Itasca in May. It’s where they met in 1970; Bob was teaching vertebrate ecology at the University of Minnesota Biological Station, and Nikki was a graduate student.

“May is a good time to go because the wildflowers, the trilliums, are blooming,” Bob said. “It’s the peak of the bird migration, too, especially the warblers, and since the trees aren’t all leafed out yet, what you hear you usually can see.”

The recent visit, restricted to a day trip because of COVID-19 precautions, “was kind of nice in its own way – quiet, not many people, no RVs running around.”

Dr. Robert Seabloom grew up in rural Ramsey County, Minnesota, a region of hardscrabble farms north of St. Paul where his Swedish immigrant grandfather had settled. He didn’t stalk the countryside for game as a boy, but he

HAGA: Page B4

ARDOCH, ND, SISTERS’ PROJECT BRINGS HOME



THE BACON

By Ann Bailey
Grand Forks Herald

ARDOCH, N.D.

Alexis and Elizabeth Nice have gone whole hog with their summer job.

During the past few years, the sisters have nearly tripled the number of Blue Butt swine they raise and sell in the fall to customers who want to buy farm-fresh pork. Alexis, 19, and Elizabeth, 16, this summer are feeding 70 gilts and sows on the farm a few miles east of Ardoch, where they live with their parents and two younger sisters.

The two eldest Nice sisters began feeding hogs in 2016 for their venture called “Little Farm on the Prairie.” Initially, raising a few hogs to sell for meat was going to be the project of their father, Craig, who had done it as a child.

BACON: Page B4



Photos by Eric Hylden / Grand Forks Herald

TOP: Elizabeth, left, and Alexis Nice of Ardoch, N.D., purchased 70 45-pound piglets from NDSU and will raise them to market weight, 275 pounds, for butchering in the fall. **ABOVE:** Alexis, left, and Elizabeth Nice review records for their hog production venture on the family farm near Ardoch, N.D. Their dad, Craig, looks on.

Minnesota Monday aims to spark interest in agriculture seven days a week

By Ann Bailey
Grand Forks Herald

CROOKSTON – Two University of Minnesota organizations have teamed up to virtually teach youth about agriculture.

University of Minnesota Extension Youth Development – commonly called Minnesota 4-H – and the University of Minnesota Crookston Office of Outreach and Engagement are hosting free 15-minute virtual lessons on Mondays for five weeks this summer.

The online series, called “Minnesota Monday,” began June 8 and will continue through July 6. The series launched with information about soil, and on June 15, the topic was planting and weeds. The next Minnesota Monday virtual events are: June 22, pollinators; June 29, ladybugs and insects; and July 6, water quality and energy.

Michelle Christopherson, UMC director of outreach and engagement, thought of the idea for Minnesota Monday after Gov. Tim Walz ordered Minnesota schools to shut down to stem the spread of coronavirus.

For the last few months before the shutdown, the Crookston Office of Outreach and Engagement had been doing Minnesota Ag in the Classroom, a curriculum that aims to improve agricultural literacy at two area elementary schools in Polk County. Highland Elementary School in Crookston and New Heights Elementary School in East Grand Forks were participating in the newly launched program, Christopherson said.

“When COVID-19 hit, we had to come to a screeching halt,” she said.

Believing that the program should continue in another version, she talked with U of M Extension 4-H educators in a

few northwest Minnesota counties about how they could adjust it to deliver the information in another way. She and the educators thought it was important to figure out a way to get youth outdoors and interested in agriculture and their natural surroundings.

Christopherson looked at the Minnesota Ag in the Classroom curriculum and chose some ideas that could be delivered virtually to youth.

“We hope to spark an interest in a variety of activities that can strengthen the understanding of one’s food and fiber system,” Christopherson said. “The focus was northwest Minnesota, so students will start thinking more critically about their environment.”

Minnesota Monday organizers also hope that watching the series will pique an interest in an agricultural- or science-based career.

Because the program is online, parents and children who miss a session still can review it.

Meanwhile, the 15-minute virtual sessions also are designed to be a “teaser” for an upcoming program called “In Your Backyard.” That program, which will kick off July 27 and run through Aug. 1, is for students in kindergarten through college. Three different education levels will be offered, Christopherson said.

To register for Minnesota Monday: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c044aa9a92e5-minnesota>

More information: <https://youthcentral.umn.edu/> and <https://www.crk.umn.edu/units/outreach-and-engagement>

Minnesota Monday’s Facebook page is available at: <https://www.facebook.com/MinnesotaMonday/>

BACON

From Page B1

But when he learned that his daughters could apply for U.S. Agriculture Department Farm Service Agency youth loans to help them get started raising hogs, he asked them if they wanted to raise them instead.

Alexis and Elizabeth were on board, so they each applied for a \$5,000 youth loan, which they used to pay for operating costs and equipment. They purchased building materials, feeders, fencing equipment and a trailer to haul the pigs. In 2016, they bought 25 hogs, which they sold in the fall to customers who wanted to buy either a whole or half hog. That first year, the sisters made enough money to pay off their operating loans. They have about three years of payments left on their equipment loan.

As word about the tastiness of the Nice sisters' pork spread, demand rose, so they increased the number of hogs they raised. This year, Alexis and Elizabeth purchased 70 45-pound piglets from NDSU; when they reach 275 pounds in October, the hogs will be hauled to a processing facility to be butchered.

This spring, people asked them almost daily if they had pork to sell. "Just because of this whole COVID-19 thing, we increased our numbers this year," Alexis said. In October, the Nice sisters will haul the hogs to a USDA-certified butcher shop in Casselton, N.D. Most of the hogs already have been spoken for, and customers will pick up the pork at the Casselton shop.

Between now and October, Alexis and Elizabeth will spend time each day taking care of the herd.

"We have to fill up their water, make sure their electric fence is still working, put in straw for bedding," Alexis said. On Thursday, June 18, Alexis was digging mud away from the bottom of the hogs' fence while

Elizabeth filled their water tank.

The hogs, which have an open shed for shelter, enjoy rooting in the mud. In previous years, they sometimes bellied under the fence, so the sisters remedied that by placing a strand of electric fence wire at the bottom. Now, they have to keep the mud away from the bottom of the fence so it doesn't short out the electric wire.

Moving the mud away from the fence isn't pleasant work, but the alternative is worse.

"We've had our share of chasing pigs," Elizabeth said, recalling a day when she had to chase back to the pen a wayward group that had escaped and were on the nearby highway.

"I had to herd them back by myself," she said.

"They're cute when they're little, feisty after that," Alexis said.

Learning that it's important to maintain good fences is one of several lessons the project has taught them. They've also learned about formulating hog rations, keeping record books and money management.

"We have to make sure we have some money after we pay the bills," Alexis said.

The hog project so far has been profitable, and Alexis is using the money to pay for college; Elizabeth is saving her share to do the same after she graduates from high school. This fall, Alexis will attend UND and Elizabeth will be a junior at Minto (N.D.) Public School.

The sisters plan to continue their hog project for the foreseeable future. When they decide it's time to get out of the venture, their younger sisters, Emma and Josephine, likely will take over.

At age 6, the littlest Nice sister already has expressed interest in Little Farm on the Prairie, Alexis said.

"Josephine calls them her little piggyies. She would like to take ownership of them," she said.

MURDER

From Page B1

The Longies were originally only charged with assault, but Wrigley said his office was able to upgrade the charges because of tips developed from his courthouse press conference days after the murder. He would not comment if any other arrests may be made. Several adults were living in the home.

HAGA

From Page B1

grew up appreciating the outdoors and the animals who shared it. "The one thing I was good at in high school was biology," he said.

He started in pre-med at the University of Minnesota but soon switched to zoology. After a stint in the Army, he entered graduate school at Minnesota. His adviser was a mammalogist who had worked briefly with Aldo Leopold, the renowned American author ("A Sand County Almanac"), scientist and environmentalist. "I like to consider myself an academic grandson of Aldo Leopold," he said, smiling.

When he graduated, he had two job offers. One was from the Canadian Wildlife Service, which wanted to send him to the Northwest Territories. The other was at UND, which was looking for a vertebrate biologist. He started at UND in 1961, developing and teaching courses on mammals, birds and wildlife management. "It was hard work," he said. "For a number of years, I was the only one there, teaching, advising grad students, doing my own research."

He retired in 1996. But he remains a scientist, an explorer, traveling this week to a conference in the Badlands. And there will be more trips to Itasca. "We've done Thanksgiving there, cooking up a small turkey, and we've participated in the annual Christmas bird counts," he said. "We go to see the fall colors. I like to take pictures then of the trees above Mary Lake, the water so still."

The mammals book started as a series of "species writeups" he was asked to do by the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center in Jamestown, starting in 2003. He assembled those in a book in 2011. The new edition, with photographic portraits and distribution maps of nearly 90 mammals that call North Dakota home, reflects "significant shifts that have occurred in the ranges of certain species" and documents the arrival in North Dakota of a few new species, including the fringed Myotis bat, the water shrew and the wolverine. Elk and moose have moved a county or two beyond their previous ranges.

Seaborn dedicated the book to colleagues from across the decades and to "all of my former students who, over 35 years, trapped, netted,

measured, tagged and radio-tracked everything from shrews to elk, often under nearly impossible conditions."

He has kept Richardson ground squirrels as pets, declares a fondness for prairie dogs and kangaroo rats, and mourns the loss of the black-footed ferret, doomed here by the widespread poisoning of their singular food source, the prairie dog. He delighted, though, in reports earlier this month of a sighting in western North Dakota of a swift fox, scarce for 30 years.

Seabloom describes himself as an optimist when it comes to protection of the natural world, thanks to the work of new generations of scientists, teachers and students.

"We know a lot more these days," he said. "But we have to do a better job of communicating to the public."

Chuck Haga had a long career at the Grand Forks Herald and the Minneapolis Star Tribune before retiring in 2013. He can be contacted at crhaga@gmail.com.

jobsHQ

FIND YOUR NEXT JOB AND BUILD YOUR CAREER

WWW.JOBSSHQ.COM

Forum Communications Company

SHARE YOUR CELEBRATIONS!

Weddings, engagements, milestone birthdays, anniversaries, births, all other special events and achievements are published each Saturday in the Grand Forks Herald's CELEBRATIONS.

To place an announcement, go to grandforksherald.com and click on the Milestones tab at the top right side of the page.

Deadline: Wednesday 4pm for the following Saturday publication.

Questions? Call 1-866-910-9009 or send an email to: celebrations@gfherald.com.

Find your next home at

homesHQ

www.homeshq.com

BADGER DENTAL GROUP

We Cater To Cowards

A smile increases your face value!

Jeremy Badger, DDS
Kathryn Korsmo, DDS

1197-A South Columbia Rd
Grand Forks, ND
701-775-4751
badgerdentalgroup.com

jobsHQ

NEW JOB OPENINGS ADDED EVERY HOUR

WWW.JOBSSHQ.COM

Forum Communications Company

ALL WELCOME TO OUTDOOR BIBLE SERVICES

at JIM & SHARILYN RICHTSMEIER'S BACK YARD

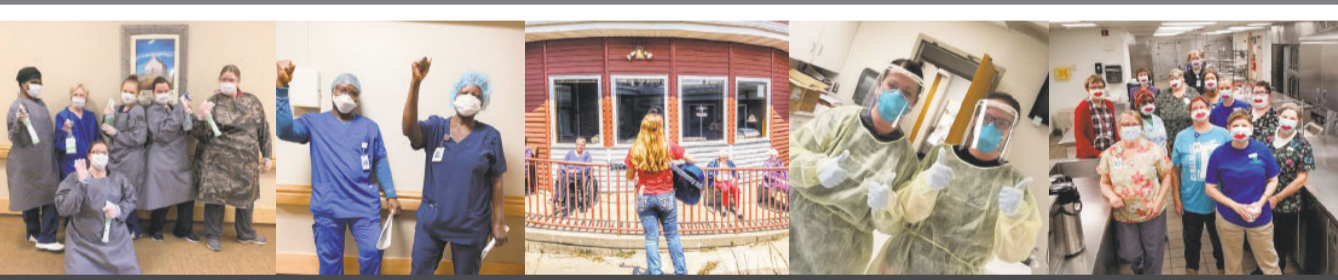
6950 29TH ST S, GRAND FORKS

SUNDAYS @ 7:00PM JUNE 14, 21 & 28 (weather permitting)

Come spend an hour with the Bible

701-789-1105

C. Dunham G. Gasser



Thank You, Long Term Care Community!

Sometimes adversity brings out the best in us. And sometimes people do the right thing, just because they believe in what they're doing.

That's how it was when COVID-19 hit North Dakota. Many unsung heroes stepped up to the plate – including the dedicated men and women who staff the 218 long term care facilities in our state.

More than 16,000 staff members responded to the hardships and pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic by providing tireless, compassionate care. If there is a bright spot in this pandemic – **a silver lining, one could say** – it is the resourcefulness demonstrated by these remarkable people.

To honor them, Gov. Doug Burgum and the North Dakota Long Term Care Association have designated Tuesday, June 23, as Silver Linings Day in our state. Please join us in saying "Thank you!" to our long term care community for going above and beyond during these challenging times.

INTERESTED IN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING?

WE CAN HELP, FREE OF CHARGE!

Check our website www.nadc-nabn.org to find out when we're in your area next or give us a call at **406-259-3804** for immediate assistance!

357312



North Dakota Long Term Care ASSOCIATION