

NORTHERN VIEW

Far and wide.

Father Bill: A priest, a scholar and friend to so many

Ken Burns should do a documentary film on the life and times of the Rev. William Sherman. “Prairie Priest,” he could call it. Or “The Peoples’ Priest,” and note the plural “peoples.”

As I sat in a pew at majestic St. Michael’s Catholic Church on Tuesday, waiting for Father Bill’s funeral to begin, I studied the faces of others who were there to pay their respects to this remarkable man.

I saw them, and I swear I could see beyond them to rows and rows of ghostly faces – images of immigrant parents and grandparents who had come to the near north side of Grand Forks from central and eastern Europe. They were people who spoke the old languages or heavily accented English, and they worked on the railroad, or at factories and retail stores and as laborers for the city.

They had little education, many of them, but they valued education for their children above most things. They bought or built small homes and tended large gardens and said “God bless America” as they preserved the customs of Poland, Germany, Russia and old Czechoslovakia.

Father Bill saw them. They fascinated him, and in his pastoral duties he nurtured their love of country, family and God. And as a sociologist, he collected and shared their stories in books: “Prairie Mosaic,” an ethnic atlas of North Dakota with maps showing where 40 immigrant groups had settled in ethnic enclaves, and “Plains Folk,” an ethnic history of the state, co-authored with the late Dr. P.V. Thorson, a UND history professor.

Sociology had provided a window, a way to understand what it means to be from somewhere, the priest told me on that spring day in 1997. It had allowed him to feel a closeness with the varied cultures that made up St. Michael’s.

“It’s a garden of flowers, our parish of peoples,” Sherman said after visiting with Walt Wilhelmi, then 86, a native of Romania. “I’m writing a book on my life,” Wilhelmi said. “I’m only 8 years old so far and I’ve got 12 pages written – on both sides.”

Sherman knew the proud man’s story: homesteading and farming with his family in northeastern North Dakota, working in California in the 1930s with the Civilian Conservation Corps, back to Grand Forks to work in construction until starting his own company in the early 1960s. The year before the flood, he had celebrated a 50th wedding anniversary with wife Barbara.

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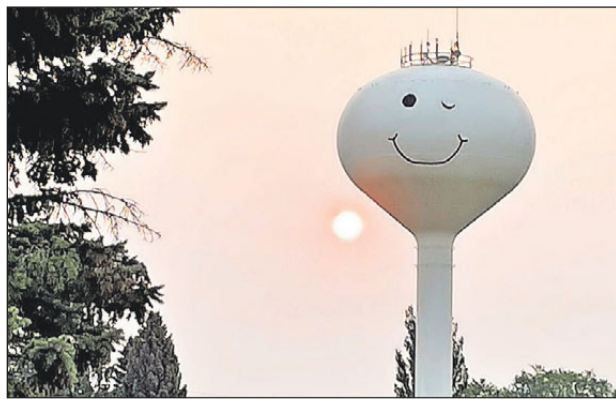
Cleanup week set to begin Monday

By Meghan Arbegast
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS – After being postponed due to flooding and wet conditions, spring cleanup will start on Monday, May 16, and run until Friday, May 20, in Grand Forks and East Grand Forks.

Spring cleanup is held annually and allows residents to dispose of household junk and bulkier items, such as appliances and furniture. Residents can leave the items on the curb, where they normally place their garbage, by 7 a.m. of their normal collection day. For those living in apartments, people can place items on the berm next to the street.

Items also can be dropped off at the Grand Forks landfill free of charge throughout the



Grand Forks Herald

The sun rises behind a water tower in Grand Forks.

week, as long as Grand Forks residents show proof of residency, such as a driver’s license or utility bill. The landfill will be open for extended hours in coming days, including 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, May 14, and Saturday, May 21, and 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. May 16-20.

Grand Forks Public Works Director Sharon

Lipsh said the cleanup keeps people from disposing of large refuse items — such as appliances and furniture — in dumpsters and other places throughout the year.

Last year, 1,184 tons of refuse was collected on cleanup week, with 1,136 tons being hauled to the landfill by crews. Another 48 tons of refuse was

dropped off at the landfill by residents.

Lipsh said she is anticipating a busy cleanup week, especially after a wet spring.

“I think we might see some additional items just because of some wet basements from all the rain and the seepage and things like that,” Lipsh said. “I’ve been hearing some people have had water in their basements so we’re probably going to see some carpet out there.”

Residents can dispose of glass as long as they set it to the side for crews to see. Small quantities of branch clippings can be disposed, though large piles of tree stumps and branches won’t be picked up by crews. Crews won’t pick up commercial quantities of junk, larger residential construction project

waste and chemicals.

While Grand Forks only holds a cleanup event once a year, Lipsh said the Grand Forks landfill is now allowing residents to drop off items four times a year for free as long as they show proof of residency, such as a driver’s license or utility bill.

“Typically they’ve always been charged anytime they bring something to the landfill. So to help promote people getting rid of stuff when they want to get rid of stuff, we’re going to offer that to our residents,” Lipsh said.

For more information about spring cleanup week, go to <https://www.grandforksgov.com/government/city-departments/public-works/clean-up-week>.



Eric Hylden / Grand Forks Herald

Lesa Van Camp, editor and publisher of the Valley News and Views in Drayton, North Dakota, checks over the current edition of the weekly paper Thursday. Van Camp will print the final edition of the newspaper on June 2.

DRAYTON PAPER CLOSING IF A BUYER ISN'T FOUND

By Ingrid Harbo
Grand Forks Herald

Drayton, N.D.

Lesa Van Camp is holding out hope that somebody will buy Valley News & Views, the newspaper in Drayton.

On May 5, the editor, publisher and owner of the northeast North Dakota paper announced on the front page of Valley News & Views that she was “forced to make the difficult decision to stop the presses” for the paper to focus on her health. Though Van Camp has been searching for somebody to take over the paper, her search has not yielded any buyers.

“Until the very last issue is printed, I have hope that someone will come forward that has an interest in helping this small community to have their newspaper,” she said.

The last issue of Valley News & Views under Van Camp will be printed on June 2. Though she says the date might seem like an odd choice, it will allow her to cover the Drayton Public School Class of 2022 graduation.

“They’ve earned the right to be highlighted in the local newspaper, and it would be a disservice to them to close the newspaper before they got

their turn,” Van Camp said.

She could have continued publishing through the end of June, but that would have been close to Drayton’s Riverfest in July. Then, she said, school starts in August.

“Yes, I could have gone to the end of June, but then there’s always going to be one more thing,” she said.

Before Valley News & Views, Drayton was home to a number of other local papers since the first in the early 1880s.

The first issue of Valley News & Views was published on April 1, 1982. Van Camp’s husband Lyle Van Camp and her mother-in-law Roberta Van Camp started the paper. They ran it until 2007, when they sold it for financial reasons. In 2014, the owner died, and Van Camp decided to buy the paper.

Van Camp had little newspaper experience when she purchased Valley News & Views in 2014, but didn’t want to see the paper started by her family close.

“People do not want to see their newspaper die, so that’s why I bought it. So it wouldn’t die,” said Van Camp. “Ultimately, the irony is, I’m the one closing it.”

Without Valley News &

Views, Van Camp worries community news from the school, city government and local sports teams will go unreported. The paper has long been a place for people to print engagement announcements, birth announcements and obituaries.

“A small town community newspaper is kind of the heartbeat of the community,” said Van Camp.

Drayton Mayor Chip Olson said it would be sad not to have the presence of a local newspaper in the city.

“In small newspapers, you don’t have world news,” said Olson. “You don’t want world news — you want the local sports teams and how they’re doing, what’s going on in the community.”

One of Van Camp’s favorite parts of the job over the years has been reporting on kids in the community. Before COVID-19, Van Camp wrote a weekly feature column called “Kid of the Week,” where she interviewed early elementary students.

Students were involved in the paper in other ways. When Van Camp bought the paper, a pair of students wrote a column called the “Laiken and Taylor Column,” which they

wrote from sixth grade until graduating from high school. Now, high school English students write a weekly column.

Though she credits “wonderful columnists,” community members who submit articles and photos and volunteers for keeping the paper going, especially in the last year, Van Camp knows it is not a sustainable business model.

“It takes the community to help out from time to time, but I’m needing more and more help,” said Van Camp.

She had also been searching for an employee to report and sell advertisements, but said there was very little interest in the job.

Van Camp says her family has been supportive of her decision to close the paper, and though many have expressed they will miss the paper, community members have been understanding of Van Camp’s situation. But, that support doesn’t totally take the weight of her decision off of her shoulders.

“It does and it doesn’t,” said Van Camp. “It makes me sad. This has been a very difficult decision for me to make because I know what the town will be missing.”

Wheat, corn supplies to shrink as weather threatens US crops

By Mark Weinraub
Reuters

CHICAGO — U.S. supplies of wheat and corn are expected to fall in the coming year, further tightening the world's already snug grain balance sheet created by crop shortfalls and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the government said on Thursday. A record U.S. soybean harvest will provide

some relief to global oilseed shortages, as food prices hit all-time highs in February and March, according to the U.N.'s food agency.

But soybean supplies will remain stubbornly tight amid rising demand from export, biofuel and crush sectors, the U.S. Agriculture Department said in its monthly World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates

report. Thursday's USDA report sent Chicago Board of Trade wheat futures: surging to their highest since March 22, while corn and soybean futures 0#C, 0#S: hit session highs.

U.S. soybean production for the 2022/23 marketing year was seen at 4.640 billion bushels. The outlook compares with market expectations

for 4.613 billion bushels. In the 2021/22 marketing year, U.S. soybean production totaled 4.435 billion bushels, the biggest to date.

The government also projected that U.S. corn production would fall 4.3% to 14.460 billion bushels in 2022. That was down from its February estimate of 15.24 billion and below market expectations for

14.773 billion. "It's going to be a volatile summer. The weather markets are going to be outsized," said Craig Turner, senior ag broker at Daniels Trading.

USDA said that the cold and wet weather that delayed this year's planting around the U.S. Midwest reduced yield prospects for the corn crop.

It projected that 2022/23 end stocks of corn will fall to 1.360 billion bushels from 1.440 billion a year earlier. Soybean supplies were seen rising to 310 million bushels from 235 million.

Wheat stocks for the 2022/23 marketing year were seen at 619 million bushels, down 5.5% from 2021/22 and the lowest in nine years.

HAGA

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St. Michael's was a blue-collar parish of about 5,000 people in 1997, many just a generation descended from French, Irish, Germans from Russia, Polish and other immigrant settlers.

It was a natural fit for Sherman.

"The worst part of the flood (of 1997) was the dislocation of our people from their homes and their neighborhoods," he said. "They lost all those things that give a sense of roots and cohesiveness, and that hurts. The wail of sirens still frightens some of the kids because they remember how abruptly their parents reacted to people banging on their doors (and shouting) 'You must leave!'"

Sherman admired the pride and work ethic of the peoples who settled in this part of the country, the sod homes of Germans from Russia, the

nurturing collectivism of Scandinavians. He joined ethnic groups to learn their customs. I can't remember if he told me the story of how he joined the Sons of Norway or if it was Thorson, who had brought him to a chapter lunch. He enjoyed himself there, and he asked a lady, "How does a fellow become a member of this group?" She eyed him and his Roman collar skeptically and asked, "Are you Norwegian?" "No," Sherman said. "Well, are you Lutheran?" Again, he had to say "No." But he quickly added, "I chew snoose."

"You're in," the lady said.

At his funeral, he was remembered as a workhorse for the church, a priest "with a down-to-Earth way of conferring the Gospel." With the bishop of the Diocese of Fargo listening and smiling, a priest told of Sherman meeting the new bishop and confirming that he came from Nebraska.

"Thank God," Sherman said, "that we have a bishop who knows the difference between a cow and a horse."

At the visitation, parishioners told of Sherman's gentleness and kindness, his work with the poor and his refusal to judge them, his reaching into his own clothes closet and billfold to provide a hand up. People cited examples of his straight talk and sense of humor. Fellow scholars flooded Facebook with testimonials.

"Father Sherman was a prolific scholar on the ethnic settlement of North Dakota, and he continued to conduct research even at 90 years old," retired UND sociology professor Curt Stofferahn wrote. "He was one of the kindest, gentlest, most modest and humble men you were likely to meet. I was privileged to call him my mentor, friend and colleague."

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.

Celebrate spring, with two books for loved ones and yourself – *North Dakota Days* and *North Dakota Travels* – by local artist Bro Halff.



These *Pride of Dakota* books are available in Grand Forks at Ferguson Books, and at amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com, and simplergifts.com. Enjoy an interview with the artist at youtube.com. Enter Prairie Pulse 1808 in the search bar.

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