



## Inside this Issue:

- Creating the Custer Drama: Trails West - Page 2-3
- The beginning of the Mandan School System - Page 4

## Quote of the week:

“I became a journalist because I did not want to rely on newspapers for information.”  
~Christopher Hitchens

Jan. 13, 2017 • Vol. 1, No. 3

\$0.50

www.MidwesternScout.com

# HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED: WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

**Dustin White**  
*Editor*

The Veteran’s Cemetery, south of Mandan, was set to be under a full coverage of wreaths for another year in a row, as part of the Wreaths Across American project; however, added difficulties would be seen. With multiple blizzards running through area, and a frigid cold entering the state, this year’s Wreaths project experienced its fair share of hiccups.

Having raised their goal of 6,000 wreaths, the local Wreaths Across America program was set for the ceremony on Dec. 17, 2016, to correspond with nearly 1,100 similar ceremonies across the country.

As the date approached though, a blizzard rolled through the state, followed by extreme colds. With temperatures predicted to plummet below zero on the Saturday of the ceremony, the Bismarck Squadron Civil Air Patrol, who facilitated this year’s Wreath program, made the decision to adjust the program, for the safety of all involved.

Unlike years past, the formal ceremony would be canceled.

“Our ceremony each year is very special and central to the mission of Wreaths Across America,” Lt Col Sean Johnson, Chief of Staff for the N.D. Wing of the Civil Air Patrol, said. “We don’t take lightly the decision to cancel the ceremony portion of the event. We take seriously the safety of our members and the public though, and decided the best way to minimize everyone’s exposure to



*Dustin White*

**IN EXTREME COLD, NEARLY 500 VOLUNTEERS VENTURED OUT TO THE VETERAN’S CEMETERY TO LAY WREATHS ON OUR VETERANS HEADSTONES.**

the elements is to focus the event on placing wreaths on individual gravesites.”

### Delays

While attendees were encouraged to bundle up due to the extreme weather that was forecasted, a delay in the shipment of wreaths would occur.

Due to poor road conditions, and harsh weather throughout much of the country, the truck, coming from Maine, carrying the wreaths for the event, had to proceed slower than anticipated.

The schedule for the event was up in the air, and for those wanting to attend, they would have to wait patiently.

Hoping to be able to still complete the event during that weekend, the Wreaths program was tentatively rescheduled for the next day, Sunday, Dec. 18. Knowing they would have to still brave the extreme weather, it was just a matter of waiting for the shipment to arrive.

Grateful, the Civil Air Patrol received the wreaths on Sunday, and the ceremony was able to

proceed.

### Ceremony

Looking to keep people out of the cold, the ceremony began promptly at 3 p.m. While only 472 individuals attended the ceremony, less than half of previous years, the volunteers made quick work of laying the wreaths.

However, there was another difference from past years. With many of the graves nearly com-

*Continued on Page 2*

# GIVING A VOICE TO THE VOICELESS: BALKOWITSCH

**Dustin White**  
*Editor*

Sitting behind dual monitors, in his office in an industrial portion of Bismarck, Shane Balkowitsch spends much of his day running an online retail store. Immersed in a life of technology, he has found a way to escape to a simpler time, while also using his passion to give a voice to those who have been stripped of theirs.

Born and raised in Bismarck, Balkowitsch would eventually leave his hometown. Looking to start a career in the medical field, he worked his way to becoming a registered nurse, but fate would have another calling in line.

Returning home, Balkowitsch was drawn into the online retail business, after he began helping

his mother, Sharon Balkowitsch, sell antiques and collectibles out of her basement. Introduced to eBay, the business would launch from pushing just around \$3,000 in revenue during 1998, to becoming a multimillion dollar venture.

Then four years ago, in 2012, Balkowitsch would come upon a photo online that caught his attention. Upon further investigation, he discovered that the photo was created through the wet plate process. He was hooked.

Researching the process, Balkowitsch stumbled upon a book by John Coffey, which would lead him down the rabbit hole. Not being a photographer himself, Balkowitsch entered into a new world, one in which was generally reserved for advanced photographers.

Immersing himself in the wet

plate, or collodion process, Balkowitsch would acquire the objects that he needed in order to begin his new journey. Just 60 days after first seeing the fascinating image he had stumbled upon on the internet, Balkowitsch, in October of 2012, would capture his first image in silver. The sitter; his brother Chad Balkowitsch.

That first plate would eventually turn into nearly 2,000, and through the process, Balkowitsch had found his voice. Knowing that many others are not so lucky, he has in turn used his passion for the collodion process to also give a voice to others.

### Can’t Drink Oil

Through the summer of 2016, Balkowitsch would be busy with a new project titled “Northern Plains

Native Americans: A Modern Wet Plate Perspective.”

Following in the footsteps of 19th century wet plate photographers who had undertaken similar series, Balkowitsch would have a chance to not only meet, but befriend many from the Standing Rock Reservation. Taking friendship very seriously, when Balkowitsch heard of the protest against the Dakota Access Pipe Line, he knew that he couldn’t sit behind his desk, but had to stand with his friends in the heat.

With the protestors main concern being their water supply, the same Missouri River which the DAPL is proposed to go under, Balkowitsch knew he had to capture what was taking place,

*Continued on Page 5*

# CREATING THE LOCAL CUSTER DRAMA: TRAILS WEST

**Dustin White**  
Editor

When settling down, it can be easy to pass over North Dakota. While the state is currently experiencing a booming oil industry in the west, other potential opportunities often are not considered.

Dr. Frederick J. Walsh, who was the playwright for "Old Four-Eyes," a predecessor to the current Medora Musical, and "Trail West," an outdoor drama at Fort Lincoln, nearly was guilty of the same mistake before he moved to the state in 1952.

"North Dakota is one place we crossed off our list fast," Walsh said in a 1959 interview.

However, Walsh and his wife decided to take a second look at the state. Discovering an

untapped potential, they decided to take the chance, passing over a deanship at the Pasadena Play House.

Walsh instead found himself in Fargo, as the head of the speech department at the North Dakota Agricultural College (now N.D. State University). There he was with a dream, to bring historical outdoor dramas to his newfound state.

At the same time, concerned citizens were beginning to become concerned with the Theodore Roosevelt Centennial.

As the tides began to come together, Walsh found a realization to his dream when he was approached in regards to a proposed drama at Medora.

"Old Four-Eyes" would be born, having been written by Thomas Patterson with the assistance of

Walsh.

The first year, 40,000 people made the trip to see the drama.

## Excitement in Mandan

Seeing that success was almost assured in Medora, with officials estimating that the attendance would nearly double in their second year, citizens in Mandan began to become excited about the possibility of bringing a historical drama to the area.

Consulting with Walsh, representatives from Mandan began moving forward. The Mandan Historical Development Association was founded, which began overseeing the process.

From the beginning though, there were difficulties with getting the drama off the ground. After finishing the first season of "Old Four-Eyes," Walsh returned

to the NDAC and found that he had lost one of his instructors in the speech department.

Becoming desperate to find a replacement quickly, Walsh was hit by a bit of good fortune. Finding a letter on his desk one morning, he learned that an old friend of his was searching to get back into the teaching profession. His name was W.T. Chichester.

It was quickly decided that Chichester would relocate from Ohio to Fargo, and fill in the position at NDAC. He would also help Walsh out a bit more, by collaborating on the historical drama that would soon open in Mandan.

With Walsh serving as the producer, and Chichester as the director, they brought on Patterson as well, who would help in writing the script for this new

drama. "Trail West" was being birthed.

While the creation of the actual drama was being produced in Fargo, the MHTA was overseeing the construction of the "Custer Memorial Amphitheater." The set-up was meant to be similar to what Medora was doing, but the MHTA wanted to go larger.

Upon completion, the amphitheater, which was the first in the northwest to be constructed of concrete, boasted 2,000 seats, as well as being built upon the actual trail that Custer and his Seventh Cavalry left on for the battle of the Little Big Horn.

Tests in the location also indicated what appeared to be near perfect acoustics, which allowed

*Continued on page 3*

# REMEMBERING HISTORY: THE STEAM ENGINE

**A Past Restored**  
Dustin White

Steaming through Mandan, bell ringing, Northern Pacific 2660, was nearing the end of its life. It would only be in operation for around two decades, but during that time, it would become the pinnacle of steam power and locomotion.

A Class A-3 locomotive, the 2660 was one of eight 4-8-4, "Northern," engines created by Baldwin Locomotive Works. Built in 1938, they would continue in use until 1958, two years after Baldwin ceased creating additional engines.

The 4-8-4 wheel arrangement of the Northern allowed for the use of a larger firebox, which provided additional power. In turn, the Northern became a more diverse locomotive, being suited for both express passenger and fast freight services.

While the Northern was considered a "Super Power" in steam locomotive design, it was introduced during a time in which the diesel engine was becoming increasingly popular.

On May 26, 1934, Burlington Railroad's Zephyr trains took its maiden journey from Denver to Chicago. It was a futuristic train, with speeds up to 112 miles per hour. During that first voy-

age, crowds gathered around the rail lines in Colorado, Nebraska, Iowa and Illinois, to catch a glimpse of the sleek new train.

The Zephyr, and diesel trains in general, were a gamble. The railroad industry was seeing a revenue that had sunk to dangerous levels. However, they had little choice; steam powered engines were expensive to maintain, while coal, as a fuel source, lacked.

Diesel power seemed to promise lower costs, as well as improve efficiency. They could run faster, work longer, with fewer stops.

On the other hand, steam locomotives required frequent stops to replenish coal and water. They also required massive amount of energy in order to build up steam pressure; energy that would be discarded whenever the locomotive had to stop or shut down. In just a week, such process caused the locomotive to consume its own weight in coal and water.

Steam powered engines also required costly maintenance. Law dictated that each month, the boilers would have to be cleaned out, while each engine required regular, and extensive, overhaul. This meant that each steam locomotive was available for work only 35 percent of the



THE NORTHERN PACIFIC 2660 ON ONE OF ITS LAST JOURNEYS THROUGH MANDAN.

time; compared to a diesels 95 percent availability.

Just two years after the Zephyr was introduced, Burlington reported a remarkable drop in operating costs. While their steam powered trains cost 70 cents a mile, the Zephyr reduced that cost by over half, operating at just 31 cents per mile.

Railroad companies saw a way to become profitable again, which spelt the doom of the steam engine.

However, while steam engines were beginning to disappear from rail yards, Baldwin, who never was able to achieve

success with diesel engines, continued pushing forward with their steam locomotives.

It was in this environment, as a bid to continue to compete, that the Northern was created. In retrospect, it was doomed to eventual failure, but at the time, it proved to be a strong underdog.

But fail it did. As it soon disappeared, so did coaling stations, water towers and thousands of jobs, that no longer were necessary.

The age of the steam locomotive was over, and diesel engines began their reign.

# Cemetery

*Continued from page 1*

pletely covered by snow, volunteers also worked to clear headstones, as to allow wreaths to lean properly.

As the day wore on though, and the cold set in, some of the graves that were completely buried were only partly uncovered, to make sure that each headstone, each soldier, was honored.

In a little over half an hour, the cemetery was completely covered. The community had come together to honor all North Dakota Veterans.

## Removal

Originally scheduled for Jan. 21, 2017, removal of the wreaths from the Veteran's Cemetery also had to be postponed due to the weather.

With additional blizzards rolling through the state, blanketing the area with an massive amount of snow, many of the wreaths, and remaining headstones, became effectively buried.

Waiting for a thaw, the wreath removal has been postponed until a later date, with a possibility of moving it back to March.

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# CREATING THE LOCAL CUSTER DRAMA: TRAILS WEST

*Continued from page 2*

actors to move more freely, without the worry of having to be amplified.

Support for the historical drama was also quite strong in the community. The budget for the 1959 production was \$75,000 (over half a million in today's dollars), which was raised by local citizens and organizations.

The drama was beginning to be quite promising, with the possibility of being one of the largest attractions in the history of the state, as well as the northwest, at the time.

## Opening season

Calling for 80 actors, with 70 being speaking parts, the drama was one of a large scale.

Telling four separate stories, weaved into one finely tuned narrative, the drama showcased both history, as well as fiction.

While most of the story was based on historical figures, with only two being fictional, the drama sought to explore the history from a different light, a "behind-the-scenes" view. Exploring not only the "epic of the Seventh Calvary," as well as the story of Plains Indians, it also delved into the relationship between Custer and his wife Libby, as well as corruption in the Army, following the Civil War.

"Although Custer is the leading character, it's not Custer's tragedy, but the tragedy of Custer's men," Chichester said in an interview with the Bismarck Tribune in 1959. "We're portraying Custer as a human being."

Chichester also said that there would be no attempt to portray "Indians as heavies" or the Seventh as martyrs.

To the relief of many, the work that was put into the drama turned out to be a success. Over 26,000 people would attend the opening season. One special attendee was also present.

## Major Frank Anders

Considered, at the time, to be the last person alive to have seen Custer and the Seventh Calvary, Major Frank Anders was a special guest at "Trail West."

Having been born at the post hospital at Fort McKeen, on Nov. 10, 1876, he was just a baby when he, held by General Edward S. Godfrey, watched Custer depart for the Little Big Horn.

Peering along the same path, Anders was 83 years old when he first attended the drama. His presence was for more than just watching the drama though. Anders had also been a member of the Advisory Council of the Mandan Historical Development Association. In that capacity, he added a bit more interest in the production.

Being an authority of the subject, Anders delighted many by relating a number of facts about the history around Custer's Last March.

One piece of trivia that Anders was happy to share was that there were more men in the Seventh Calvary who were awarded

the Congressional Medal of Honor for their services on June 25-26, 1876, than in any other regiment that has ever served.

## Changes

Moving into the second season, there was a considerable amount of excitement. A new director was brought on board, George Poletes of St. Paul.

Remaining true to the core of the drama, Polete had made minor changes. Shortening the play to just over two hours, he also added more action and spectacle, including an "Indian attack on the fort."

However, Polete did understand that the story of Custer was controversial. It would become a balancing act, trying to weigh the history, as well as the dramatic art form.

Even with slight changes, the popularity of the drama had spread. Starting with favorable ticket sales stretching back to the previous February, the MDHA expected to see large crowds for not only the opening week, but throughout the season.

Reviews for the show were highly positive; however, turnout was not as favorable as expected. While many tourists were coming out to see the drama, it was estimated that only a small percentage of local residents made the trip.

Even with the set back, the drama continued to be seen as a success.

"Those who saw it both last year and this year say it is worth seeing again," Dr. C. A. Henderson told a group in Bismarck in 1960. "The show has changed and improved until today it is ranked among the 10 best outdoor dramas in the entire country."

However, after the initial changes for the season, each performance continued to see reworking. While the time length remained constant, "no two performances are ever exactly the same," Polete said in 1960.

In addition to changes in the drama, an additional play was added to the Custer Memorial Amphitheater. With Polete remaining as director, "Drunkard" was added to the line up.

## Challenges

1961 saw a massive rewrite of "Trail West." By the next year, the drama would be changed to the "Custer Drama." It would also be supplemented by a number of other performances, including "Dracula," which was put on by the "Centennial Players."

By the seventh season, a new production was brought out to the amphitheater; "The Lewis and Clark Story."

Each year seemed to bring out some new change. With a variety of rewrites, as well as producers and directors, the show seemed to be a success, and consistently was received with great reviews. At least with tourists.

From the beginning, area residents appeared to spurn the



**TOP: TO HELP PROMOTE TRAIL WEST, CRYING HILL WAS ADORNED WITH A SECOND SIGN. LEFT: A PAMPHLET FROM THE THIRD SEASON OF THE DRAMA**

show. While tourist numbers were on the rise, overall attendance lagged. Locals just did not show up.

It was a challenge that frustrated those putting on the drama.

"It ought to be reasonable to expect half of these people should see the show within two years," Henderson said in 1960. "Why don't local people want to take in the drama?"

Even though "Trail West" was the only outdoor historical drama, at the time, in the nation to be portrayed on the same exact spot where the history took place, citizens of the area did not seem to want to participate in the historic episodes that took place in their back yard.

Henderson held out though, as it usually took similar shows a full five years to reach their potential. With deficits closing in on \$100,000 though, the local support they initially received seemed to vanish quickly.

The financial woes would take a toll on the group. By 1962, cast members of the "Custer Drama" took to picketing at the North Dakota Capitol in order to try to spark interest with local residents. At the time, there were fears that if attendance and support didn't rise, the show would have to fold. It was a fear that would follow the production throughout the rest of its life.

Even with interest with Custer rising nationwide, with similar dramas popping up in South Dakota and Montana, leading to what some deem a spread in Custer mythology, local support in the Mandan area just did not.

Each year the public was urged to come out to the show, hoping to stave off closing, and each year, they eked by. 50-cent pieces were even minted, which were useable at participating locations in the area, in order to

help promote the event. The Mandan sign on Crying Hill was also changed to help with promotion for Trail West. But local support could not be gained.

"I know the burden that many are placed under these constant requests for money," Bob Paris said in 1964. "But ours is not a request for a donation but, instead an offer to sell tickets to the pageant in advance at a saving in price."

## Vandalism

Adding to the challenges of keeping the drama going, the summer of 1963 saw extensive damage to the amphitheater.

During an annual Boy Scouts camporee, several scouts, as well as other youth, who were drunk and appeared to sneak into the park, vandalized the amphitheater.

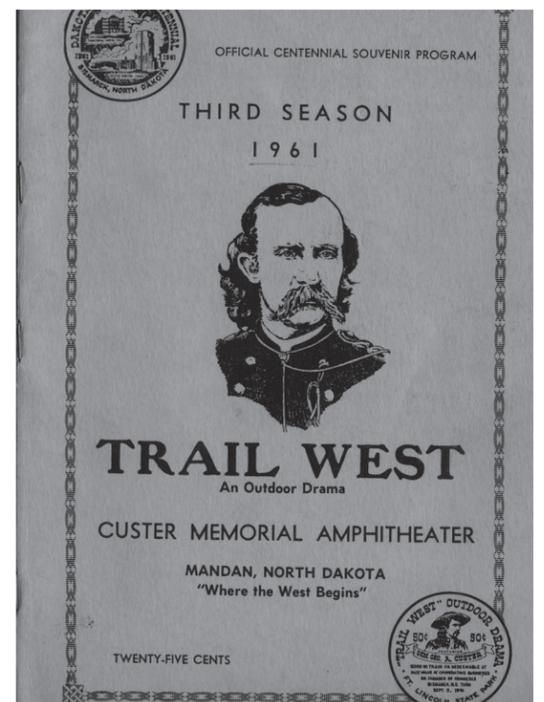
Damage was done to the set, as well as to the facilities, including urinals that were smashed with rocks.

Morton County eventually allowed the Scout Officials to step up and handle the situation. Hoping that the Scouts would take control, the county was pleased when they did.

Those involved made restitution through personal work as well as supplying materials to repair the damages.

## Closing and rebirth

Without finding proper financial support, the Mandan Development Corporation, which took over for the MDHA in



1962, made the decision to suspend the Custer Drama for 1967, with the hopes they would find more favorable arrangements the next year.

Options were looked at, such as having NDSU take over the site as a summer theater operation, but it ended up not being a feasible arrangement.

Traditional local sources were also ruled out when reliance on such was deemed impractical.

Serious efforts were put into attracting foundations to help continue the production, but eventually, they fell through.

There were other problems that the MDC was facing as well. Debts had been piling up from previous years, and the amphitheater property was in need of reconstruction.

It ended up being too much for the group, and the "Custer Drama" finally ran its course. The amphitheater would eventually be dismantled, with only memories left.

However, there were those who wanted to bring that history back. After a 22-year hiatus, in 1986, a Bismarck playwright sought to revive the drama.

Having received the necessary go ahead, the production ended up sizzling out.

# MANDAN BUILDS UP A SCHOOL SYSTEM

**Dustin White**  
Editor

Education has been an important aspect of life in Mandan. Beginning before the city of Mandan was officially organized, while the city name fluctuated, children were given the opportunity to attend school.

The first recorded term began in the spring of 1877, with an enrollment of just 12. At the time, there were no school buildings present, so the inaugural classes were held in the city's first courthouse.

Over the next few years, classes would be moved to multiple other locations, including a log cabin, owned by J.J. Mitchell, in 1879; in the Methodist church basement, in 1880; and the Presbyterian church basement in 1881.

With rapid growth in Mandan, a need was seen to construct a proper school house. In 1882, the Emerson Institute, a two-story wood building, welcomed its first classes. By the next year, it would boast an enrollment of 60 students.

The Emerson Institute would become more than just a school building though. It became a center for entertainment. Housing special programs, including concerts and plays, during its short life, it would attract visitors from not only Mandan, but also Bismarck, who came to the city by a special railcar named Accommodation.

Enrollment at the Emerson Institute grew rapidly. In 1883, the school was divided into two grades, both of which would fill up quickly. With the space becoming quite limited, the first school board of directors, which was comprised of Daniel Flynn, Dr. Henry W. Coe and Frank J. Mead, approved of an addition to the building.

Emerson Institute was now able to provide a course of study

over six years. The education system in Mandan was beginning to quickly develop.

## Rapid growth

While the school system in Mandan was quickly evolving, the population of Mandan was also experiencing rapid growth. In 1887, the city was nearing the 2,500 mark, which forced the school board to find additional ways to absorb the growing enrollment numbers.

With the Emerson Institute operating at full capacity, the school board began renting the Vinton Building, as to serve as an additional school.

The Vinton Building would serve as a temporary relief, but the need for additional schools was sorely felt.

In 1890, the first of those new schools was opened. Situated on the west side of town, the school was simply referred to as the West End School. Originally having been a home, the two-story building was easily converted to serve the needs of the school district.

Continuing to struggle with keeping up with the growth of the city, the school district would expand once again in 1897. With the Emerson Institute, which had an enrollment of 450 students, discontinuing classes, three new schools would be built.

On the east end of town, Ward School was built for the primary grades, while two larger schools were constructed in the area of town known as the Syndicate, named Lincoln and Jefferson. Just two years later, residents of Mandan would make their wishes known, as they voted to approve a bill to construct a three-story brick school, which would house both the junior and senior high, as well as the grade school for the west part of town.

## Central School

In 1900, the three-story

brick building, named Central School, housed all of the 552 school children in first to 12th grade. It was the city's first high school.

With the opening of a high school in Mandan, the first graduation class, with just two students, was held in 1901.

Construction of this new school served the city quite well. Knowing that the school would eventually have to grow, the site chosen allowed for ample opportunities.

The first expansion to the school occurred in 1911. In order to house a growing high school class, an addition was constructed on the west edge of the lot.

Big news came in 1915, when the school board at the time, in a bid to retain their positions, made the promise, that if they were reelected, Mandan would have a new high school.

True to their word, the school board immediately began trying to full fill their promises to the voters. The construction of the new facility would shortly begin, at a time in which new high schools were being built throughout state.

However, instead of finding a new site, a major addition would occur to the Central School in 1917, which would house the new high school, as well as a gymnasium, allowing students to finally practice basketball at school, and no longer at the old opera house on the corner of First Avenue and Second Street N.W.

Even though the new high school would please voters, to whom a promise was kept, as well as help ease space issues at



the Central School, an unforeseen occurrence would once again leave Mandan in search of options to house an ever increasing school population.

## Farm students and a new school

In the early years of Mandan, the school system saw very few farmers sending their children to school. At a time when the city was building additional schools to house a growing number of students, no rural students were attending the local high school.

By 1921, just a few years after farmers began sending their children to school, they were the highest percentage of students from any vocational classification, comprising 31.1 percent of the school body.

Part of the increase in farm students was credited to the success of the Mandan High School football and basketball teams, which had won the district championship for four consecutive years. Coupled with the high scholastic standing of the school, as well as unusual gymnasium privileges, Mandan became attractive to many in rural areas.

The increase in enrollment soon led to the new high school,

which was built in 1917, to become outgrown, leading to plans for a still larger building.

Searching for options, Mandan would acquire \$125,000 worth of bonds from the state, in March of 1921. \$100,000 was apportioned for the new high school, while the remaining was for the Syndicate School.

Plans were made to secure a new site, allowing the new high school to stand out as an institution by itself, but with a limited budget, the school district decided to put the building on the block, where the Central School stood.

Meeting with great opposition from the citizens of Mandan, who preferred a new location, the new high school was completed in 1924.

Merging with the Central School, the site continued a long tradition of educating the students of Mandan and the surrounding communities.

Eventually, the high school would be turned into the Mandan Junior High School, and finally the Sixth Grade Academy.

In the next few weeks, we will continue this exploration of the history of the former Mandan Junior High, as well as what the future holds for the historic landmark.

# FORMER MANDAN SCHOOL TO BE RENOVATED

Mandan's former junior high school property is going to have a new life with a planned \$8.3 million in investment to provide 39 units of affordable housing. The Commonwealth Companies of Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin, plans to move forward with the project thanks in part to funding announced this week by the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency.

## New Tricks for Old Bricks

"We are thrilled to be a part of this project and grateful to the community and NDHFA for the support," Erin Anderson, Commonwealth Companies vice president of development in the midwest region, said. "We believe affordable housing communities open a door to opportunity for families and individuals, and this project will provide an opportunity to revitalize the neigh-

borhood around the former junior high as well. We are looking forward to working with Metro-Plains Management who has provided outstanding affordable housing property management in other properties in Mandan."

Commonwealth will now be executing an agreement to purchase the property from Mother Teresa Outreach, an affiliate of Spirit of Life Catholic Church, Mandan. The development company plans to begin building renovations in March 2017 and looks to have the project completed and occupied by January 2018.

The project will consist of eight three-bedroom units, 28 two-bedroom units, and three one-bedroom units. Of these, six units will be designated as permanent supportive housing for individuals and families that have experienced homelessness.

Building and site plans include a wellness center, chapel,

community rooms and outdoor playground with improved landscaping and green space. The amenities are for use by families living in the building. The newer gymnasium will be demolished to allow for more off-street parking and green space. Support services will be provided by Mother Teresa Outreach.

## Federal Funding

The NDHFA administers the Low Income Housing Tax Credit and National Housing Trust Fund programs in North Dakota. Commonwealth was awarded \$698,822 in credit authority through the LIHTC program and \$1,021,024 through the HTF for the adaptive reuse of the former school into La Sagrada Familia Apartments.

Under the LIHTC program, property owners receive the federal tax credits for 10 years. The federal tax credits are sold to

investors to generate equity for affordable housing projects. Projects supported by the program must be affordable for households at or below 60 percent of area median income for at least 15 years.

The purpose of the HTF is to increase and preserve the supply of rental housing for extremely low income households, those earning less than 30 percent of the area median income. Financial awards are structured as forgivable zero-interest loans with a minimum term of 30 years. Twelve of the units in the project fall under this category including the six permanent supportive housing units mentioned earlier.

## Local Support Needed

To be considered for federal funds, projects needed evidence of local support equal to at least one percent of project costs. The

Mandan City Commission in September approved a loan of \$83,186 toward the project. This serves as a partial community match toward an interest buy-down program available through the Bank of North Dakota. CommunityWorks North Dakota is providing the remainder of the local match, \$89,904, also in the form of a loan.

The Mandan City Commission additionally approved payments in lieu of taxes for the project to help it cash flow. The developer will pay local taxing entities a fixed \$20,000 annually for the first five years following renovation with a three percent escalator in years six through 15. The property currently generates about \$3,000 in property taxes.

When voting to approve the assistance, Mayor Tim Helbling cited the need to address the blighted property and "make the neighborhood whole again."

# Giving a voice to the voiceless: Shane Balkowitsch and the Wet Plate Process

*Continued from page 1*

and help bring attention to the situation.

On Aug. 15, Balkowitsch, along with Corey Carson who would capture behind the scene photos, made the trek to Cannon Ball, N.D. There, he would put on the hat of a photojournalist, to document a fight for water, a fight for life.

However, documenting the protest for future generations to look back on was only one of his goals for the day. With the potential to bring light of the protest to a different, and possibly larger audience, Balkowitsch has strived to get word out about the struggle that is currently ongoing as more than 90 nations have joined to stop the DAPL.

## Persecution of Complete Strangers

A few days before he had the chance to join friends at the DAPL protest south of Mandan, another tragedy occurred that struck Balkowitsch: the murder

of Hande Kader.

On Aug. 12, Kader, a politically active Turkish transgendered woman, was found dead. Her body was found raped, mutilated and burnt along the roadside in the Zekeriyakoy up-market.

Moved by the brutality of the murder, Balkowitsch made the decision to dedicate a performance art event, that had been in the works for nearly a year, to Kader's memory. The event, titled "The Persecution of Complete Strangers," had been inspired by photos created by William Mortensen.

Wanting to bring attention to crimes committed against perceived enemies, often fueled by xenophobia, Balkowitsch, along with a host of collaborators, came together on Aug. 27 to help honor Kader's memory.

## A Voice to the Voiceless

Passion. For those who know Balkowitsch, it is clear that he is fueled by a great passion,

which often bubbles over. It is that passion that led him to help bring light to the serious issues revolving around the DAPL protest, as well as the murder of Hader.

It is also that passion, and intensity, that has led him to other fights. When one of his school hood teachers, Joel Puffe, resigned after having been put into a difficult situation, Balkowitsch helped lead a movement to show their support of Puffe.

The outpouring support and attention became so overwhelming that the Bismarck Public School superintendent's office sent out a media release in response. However, the movement was larger than just Puffe, and helped shine light on all the teachers who are put into difficult situations in their classrooms.

That same passion has also moved Balkowitsch to work to help Levi Gartner, the son of Joe and Tiffany Garner, who was diagnosed with Stage 4 Neuroblastoma. Helping to organize a local fundraising event for Levi earlier in the year, Balkowitsch



*Dustin White photo*

FROM SHANE BALKOWITSCH'S PERSECUTION PHOTO SHOOT.

found another way to also raise funds for the Gartner family.

In June, Balkowitsch and a host of collaborators came together in order to pull off one of the largest photoshoots in Bismarck. The task was to recreate a portion of the city's darker history.

Titled "Murderer's Gulch," the shoot attempted to bring life to a Bismarck street that was known, in the late 1800s, as the wickedest street in the wickedest

town. With the photoshoot a success, Balkowitsch decided to make more of it.

Creating special prints from a wet plate photograph he took during the day, he made the decision to raise money for Levi through sales of that print. With the help of Image Printing, the photos have been donated to be used as a fundraiser, where 100% of the proceeds were able to benefit the Gartner family.

# A LONG HISTORY WITH AERONAUTICS: FLIGHT OVER THE TWO CITIES

**Dustin White**  
*Editor*

Mandan has had a long history with aeronautics. 83 years ago, on June 2, 1931, the area saw its first airmail service. Operating from a temporary landing field two miles west of Mandan, a Northwest Airways monoplane took off with 324 pounds of mail.

Two short years later, on May 2, 1933, Mandan would formally dedicate their first municipal airport. Construction on Ben Eielson Airport would continue until July of the same month.

The airport was named after Carl Ben Eielson, a Hatton native. Accompanied by Hubert Wilkins, Eielson became the first to travel across the North Pole by air.

After a year of operation, Ben Eielson Airport, which was located south of the east end of "the Strip" in Mandan, had made sufficient improvements to be designated as a commercial airport by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

During the first five years of operation, the airport was managed by Johnny "Upside Down" Osterhouse. Osterhouse came by his unique nickname by having flown upside down under the Veterans Memorial Bridge in Mandan. Later on, in 1934, he would earn the title of the first North Dakotan to race in the Indianapolis 500.

Throughout the years, Ben Eielson Airport would be the place in which many pilots would learn to fly, especially in

the years leading up to WWII.

Today, Mandan boasts one of the largest general aviation airports in the state. In the last few years, the airport has been seeing additional use. With the oil boom in the west, more planes are taking advantage of runways in our city, as they fly back and forth from western North Dakota.



*Dustin White photo*

A WORLD WAR II ERA PLANE SITS AT THE MANDAN MUNICIPAL AIRPORT DURING THEIR ANNUAL PLANES AND PANCAKES EVENT WHICH COINCIDES WITH BUGGIES-N-BLUES

**Junie B. Jones**  
**The Musical**  
**2017**

**Book and Lyrics by:**  
**Marcy Heisler**

**Music by:**  
**Lina Goldrich**

**Adapted from the**  
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**Series of books**  
**by Barbara Park**

**January 13 & 14 - 7:30 pm**  
**January 15 - 2:00 pm**

**Mandan High**  
**School Auditorium**

**\$10 - Adults**  
**\$5 - Students & Seniors**

**Directed by:**  
**Anne Jorgenson Green**

# THE HISTORIC DISPUTE ALONG THE RIVER

*(Editor's Note: Over the next couple of issues, I will be exploring the history of the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota, and the controversy that has surrounded it. As a journalist, my goal is to remain neutral in this series of articles. In full disclosure, my beliefs on the subject are diverse. While I am against the pipeline route personally, I will strive to remain unbiased in my reporting.*

*In order to try to remain as accurate as possible, no rumors or speculations will be reported. I've strived to make sure that each piece of these articles are backed up with multiple documentation and sources. At times though, some of the sources used will go unnamed, as requested by those interviewed over the course of the last few month.)*

**Dustin White**  
Editor

"It was about two years ago that we (Standing Rock Sioux Reservation) were informed that the Dakota Access Pipeline was being built close to our reservation," Dave Archambault II, Chairman of Standing Rock, said.

By the time Standing Rock was informed of the pipeline route, the planning stages of DAPL had largely been completed. Yet, the current route, which passes just north of the Standing Rock Reservation, was not the only one that had been considered.

Early on in the planning stages, an alternative route had been proposed, which would have crossed the Missouri River 10 miles north of Bismarck.

While some would report that the Bismarck route would be dismissed because "white residents refused" to allow the pipeline to cross north of the city, it was the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who rejected the route.

Citing that the route would be 11 miles longer, cross more waterbodies and wetlands, and being difficult to stay 500 or more feet from homes, the Corps made it clear that the route would not be possible. A final blow to the route was that it would cross an area that was considered by federal pipeline regulators as a "high consequence area."

With the Bismarck route scrapped, the Corps opted for a shorter route via Lake Oahe, passing near Standing Rock. By September of 2014, the new route had largely been confirmed.

On Sept. 30, 2014, officials from Standing Rock met with representatives from Dakota Access. Occurring three months before the company had applied for a permit with the North Dakota Public Service Commission, and almost two years before construction of the pipeline began in the state, the Tribe made their stance clear the route.

"We recognize our treaty

boundaries from 1851 and 1868, and because of that, we oppose the pipeline," Archambault told representatives from Dakota Access. "We have a standing resolution passed in 2012 that opposes the pipeline within that treaty boundary. This is something that the tribe is not supporting."

Officials from Standing Rock, during the Sept. 30 meeting, would make it clear that the Tribe would fight the pipeline, and that they were ready to do whatever it takes to stop it.

However, the meeting itself was meant to provide the Tribe with information from the company, as well as answer questions they may have. Not included in the meeting were federal or state officials, who would have had oversight over the pipeline.

During the meeting, Chuck Frey, vice president of engineering for Energy Transfer Partners, also tried to assure the Tribe that Dakota Access had purposefully avoided the existing tribal boundary when selecting the route in order to avoid known cultural artifact areas.

With a rich history, and many cultural significant sites in the area, officials from the Tribe were cautious about the claim. Waste Win Young, the former tribal historic preservation officer, informed Frey that 66 villages had existed along the Missouri River, and that many other areas with human remains or other cultural artifacts and sacred prayers sites were present.

Frey would ask the Tribe if there were maps available that documented the sites, so they could be avoided; however, Tribal officials stated there that no such documents were publicly available. Instead, they requested that Dakota Access consult with Standing Rock's tribal historic preservation office.

"We ask that you consult with Standing Rock because we do have the expertise and we have knowledge of where the sites are," Archambault said.

The Tribe's opposition, voiced during the meeting, would not be reported to state regulators by Frey, who was the primary company representative who testified about the project to the PSC.

## Question of Consultation

On Jan. 25, 2016, Dakota Access announced that it had received permit approval by the PSC. On their website, they wrote that they had hopes to have the pipeline operational by the end of the year.

A little over a year had passed since the Tribe and Dakota Access had their initial meeting. Communication had broken down, with the Tribe and state and federal government having different expectations.

Over 13 months, the PSC held meetings in regards to

DAPL. While the Tribe opposed the pipeline, no representative was present.

However, while more than a year of meetings were held, during 2015, only three meetings were held in regards to public input on the construction of DAPL.

Announced throughout the region through local papers, the announcement was missing from the Tribe's official paper.

"We have our own paper and it wasn't placed in there," Archambault said. "In a government to government relationship, we shouldn't have to dig through others papers."

While the announcement was missing from the Tribe's official paper, Julie Fedorchak, chair of the PSC, said that Archambault's office was notified of the meetings. For Fedorchak, the absence of the Tribe appeared odd, as they had engaged with the commission on other issues in the past.

The Tribe had a different focus though.

"Section 106 is what we wanted to be consulted on," Archambault said.

It would be through the Corps that such a consultation was to take place. But connecting with the Corps would prove to be difficult.

"We have actually been having a hard time setting up a meeting with the corps for this project," Win Young had said during the Sept. 30 meeting with Dakota Access. Young would add that on previous projects, the Corps hadn't consulted with the Tribe.

## Defining Meaningful

As required by federal law, meaningful nation to nation consultation was expected to occur between the Tribe and Corps. However, there were differing opinions as to what meaningful consisted of.

"There were four things we wanted: to meet with the decision makers, be part of the plan, ask that we be heard, and some deliberation on our meetings," Archambault said. "That never happened. Instead, the Corps would make calls and send letter, and they said that was consultation."

A level of consultation would eventually occur on Feb. 17, 2015, when the Corps sent a letter to the Tribal Historian Preservation Office.

"The USACE permitting process is the only Federal action associated with the project and therefore USACE is solely responsible for conducting consultation with interested Tribes in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The purpose of this letter is to initiate Section 106 consultation and review, determine your interest in consulting on this undertaking, and to gather information that will assist the Corps in



*Dustin White photo*

## SITTING ALONG THE CANNONBALL RIVER, A LONE CANOE WAITS.

identifying historic properties."

Responding, the THPO voiced their interest in consultation, and requested a full archeological investigation. They were met with silence.

It would be nearly half a year before the Corps responded. On Sept. 15, the Tribe received a formal letter inquiring if they would want to participate in the National Historic Preservation Act process. A month was given to respond, but it was more time than was needed.

Emphasizing that the tribe's desire to participate, the THPO also reminded the Corps that up to that point, they had not been allowed to do such. Several more months would pass, and when the Corps did respond, it was in a shocking manner.

Publishing a draft Environmental Assessment in mid-December, the Corps "falsely claimed that THPO had indicated no impact to the tribe," according to a docket filed in Federal Court.

A year after the initial letter from the Corps, on Feb. 29, 2016, the Omaha Commander for the Corps toured the borehole site. A week later, a follow up tour was conducted, on March 7, accompanied by archeologist from the Corps and the Tribe.

Observing the area, they witnessed dirt that had been pushed to the surface by moles, which contained prehistoric pottery shards, pieces of bone, as well as tools. Discovered were sites the Tribe had been unaware of.

Yet, such discoveries did not find their way into the Corps assessment on April 22, which declared no historic properties would be affected.

However, while the Corps appeared to drag their feet a bit, court documents also suggest that they weren't the only ones who failed in proper communication.

While the Tribe held that the

Corps did not offer them a reasonable opportunity in the Section 106 process, or provide meaningful consultation, the Corps argued, according to court documents, that they had "documented dozens of attempts to engage Standing Rock in consultations to identify historical resources at Lake Oahe..."

The Corps also held that Colonel Henderson met with the Tribe no fewer than four times in the spring of 2016, in order to discuss their concerns regarding the pipeline.

## Movement Begins

As snow covered the ground, a movement was beginning to take a new shape. A century old fight had taken a new, but familiar, form. Unbeknownst to those, who on April 1, 2016, set the foundations of the Sacred Stones Camp, a pleasant surprise would blossom out of the struggle.

Gathered upon the land of LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, who was a Tribal historian with the Standing Rock Tribal Historic Preservation Office, and the closest land owner to the proposed Missouri River crossing of the Dakota Access Pipeline, the Sacred Stones Camp was established as a way to stop the pipeline through prayer, and non-violent direct action.

The camp would also become a beacon for the nations, as a historic gathering would soon occur. However, other views would also rise as the protest grew, and various sides would vie for control of the story.

In the following issues, I will continue the exploration of DAPL. In the next installment, I will look at the beginning of the protest south of Mandan, and how it effected multiple communities, as well as how various groups tried to control the narrative.

To get the latest updates and stories, follow us on Facebook at [www.Facebook.com/MidwesternScout](http://www.Facebook.com/MidwesternScout) or visit our website at [www.MidwesternScout.com](http://www.MidwesternScout.com)

## GAME AND FISH EXPRESS CONCERNS OVER FEEDING

North Dakota is experiencing winter conditions that have many citizens concerned about stress on wildlife.

Kevin Kading, private land section leader for the State Game and Fish Department, said harsh winters often generate conversations and questions about feeding wildlife, particularly deer and pheasants.

“The Department does not promote winter feeding and does not have a winter feeding program,” Kading said. “We recognize that many people care deeply about wildlife and it can be difficult to watch nature play out, but feeding operations, good intentions and all, can actually do more harm for wildlife than good.”

Supplemental winter feeding does not benefit entire populations, Kading said. Individual and smaller groups of animals may receive some benefit from feeding, but feeding can also result in negative consequences such as congregating animals, drawing animals in from long distances and away from good winter cover, increased predation, disease concerns, spreading of noxious weeds and feeding costs.

“Poorly conducted feeding operations can actually kill more animals than what they are intended to help,” Kading said. “For example, feeding animals on or near roadways can lead to wildlife-vehicle collisions. Providing feed such as corn, which is high in sugar and starch, can lead to acidosis, rumenitis and ultimately death. And even individuals with the best of intentions, who start feeding wildlife early in winter, often end up quitting due to the amount of time and expense required, which can result in the loss of animals that become dependent on the feed.”

Wildlife rarely die from starvation in severe winters, Kading said, but it’s not uncommon



Dustin White photo

### WATCHING THE PHOTOGRAPHER, TWO DEER REMAIN CAUTIOUS.

for animals to die in these extreme conditions from exposure to cold weather. Therefore, Game and Fish promotes habitat development that can provide critical winter thermal cover, and food plots should be considered and planted near adequate winter cover.

“One alternative to feeding wildlife is for individuals, landowners or wildlife clubs to plow open areas of harvested grain or row crop fields to allow animals to gain access to waste grains,” Kading said. “These areas are also the first areas to melt off when we get a break in the weather.”

### Nonresident Any-Deer Bow Licenses

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department will have 382 any-deer bow licenses available to nonresidents in 2017.

The deadline for applying is March 1. A lottery will be held if more applications are received than licenses available. Any remaining licenses after March 1 will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis. Applicants can

apply together as a party. A separate check is required for each application.

The nonresident any-deer bow application is available at the Game and Fish website, [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov). The application must be printed and sent in to the department.

The number of nonresident any-deer bow licenses available is 15 percent of the previous year’s mule deer gun license allocation. The Game and Fish Department issued 2,550 mule deer licenses in the 2016 deer gun license lottery.

### Habitats Workshop Feb. 9-10 in Bismarck

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department and Missouri River Educational Cooperative are sponsoring a wildlife conservation and resource management workshop for teachers, environmental educators and anyone else who works with youth.

“Habitats of North Dakota” is scheduled Feb. 9-10 at the Game and Fish Department’s

main office in Bismarck. The five North Dakota habitats – wetlands, badlands, prairie, woodlands and riparian – will be studied, with the North Dakota Studies Habitats curriculum used as textbooks.

The fast-paced workshop offers a hands-on approach educators can use in their classrooms and on field trips, and in discussing classroom and curriculum integration. All supplies are provided. Preregistration is required.

Curriculum materials are suitable for both elementary and secondary teachers. Workshop instructor Sherry Niesar has a master’s degree in wildlife science and teaches many educator workshops in the region.

To register for the workshop, contact Carrie Ziegler, MREC, at 701-751-4041, or email [carrie.ziegler@mrecnd.org](mailto:carrie.ziegler@mrecnd.org). A \$100 registration fee for materials, lunch and refreshments is required.

To register for graduate credit, visit UND’s website at <http://educators.und.edu/workshop/?id=TL.HABITATS.ND>. The cost for graduate credit is \$50.

## MPO ANNUAL DINNER

The Mandan Progress Organization will hold its annual dinner Monday, Jan. 23, at the Harvest Brazilian Grill, 308 W Main Street. The event celebrates community successes achieved in 2016 and plans for the coming year.

Business representatives, citizens and all Mandan supporters are invited to attend. Register by calling 751-2983 or sending an e-mail to [kristin-haug@mandanprogress.org](mailto:kristin-haug@mandanprogress.org). The cost is \$20 per person.

With a theme of “Frosty Fun,” participants are encouraged to wear their favorite ugly winter sweaters. The evening features a variety of activities beginning with a 5 p.m. social featuring a “Pick-A-Prize Auction,” with a grand prize of a Medora trip sponsored by Cloverdale Foods Company. There will also be a snowball toss to win craft beers, wine and meal certificates (must be 21 to play).

Guests will enjoy a buffet dinner at 6:30 p.m. and a brief program including the announcement of the MPO Volunteer of the Year and Business of the Year for 2016.

The evening concludes with the “MPO Snowman Challenge,” a mock snowman building contest. Six decorated top hats and scarves will be auctioned with minimum bids starting at \$50. Half the auction proceeds will go to the winning snowman in the contest and half to the MPO toward 2017 projects and activities. Attendees can get in on the action by purchasing chances on the snowmen for an opportunity to win a portion of the ticket proceeds plus a grand prize, \$150 from BNC National Bank.

Background: The Mandan Progress Organization (MPO) is a non-profit organization comprised of businesses and citizens dedicated to creating and promoting public events and projects to enhance Mandan’s business climate and generate community pride.

## ADDING QUALITY FILMS TO BISMARCK AND MANDAN: CINEMA 100

Dustin White  
Editor

When thinking about communities engrossed in sharing diverse films, the Mandan-Bismarck area often doesn’t spring to mind. However, for over half a century, groups of avid film viewers have sought to bring a new variety of movies to the area. This winter, the Cinema 100 Film Society is once again treating the community to a diversity of films.

Opening with the film, “Life Animated” a 2016 documentary, the newest series began on Jan. 17. A total of 12 films will appear in the series, which runs through March 30, finishing with the 2016 film, “The Eagle Huntress.”

### History

It was the summer of 1951 when the forerunner of the Cinema 100 Film Society was conceived. Taking the helm of the organization was Gaylord Conrad, the father of Dean, Rowan and Kent Conrad.

The initial event consisted of a showing of “Trio,” a black and white British film. It was shown at the State Theater, a mostly abandoned movie house across from what is now the Belle Mehus Auditorium.

Beginning with success, the prospect of having a more full alternative film fare in the area seemed promising. However, a tragic loss would shock the community. In 1953, Conrad, and his wife Abigail, would pass away after an automobile accident.

It would take another three years for the film society to really take off, with the creation of the group “Cinema 100.” The group took its name from their goal of selling 100 season tickets, at \$5 each, in order to finance the series.

The undertaking of such an effort proved to be quite difficult. Showings occurred in a small auditorium in the Provident Life Building. Equipment would have to be hauled in, while local film buffs, and other organizers, had

to man the projector, which at the time required them to change the film reels. Unlike today’s movies, the process called for a break midway through the showing.

Eventually though, the group sizzled out and lied dormant for close to a decade. Attempts to revive the society occurred in the mid-1960s, but were short lived. It wouldn’t be until 1973 that Cinema 100 would have a new life breathed into it.

### Revival

The grand revival of the film society came largely due to the efforts of a trio: Arnie Lahren, a member of the English department at Bismarck Junior College (now Bismarck State College), Brian Palecek, a member of the English department at United Tribes Technical College, and John Halloran.

One of the leading forces behind the revival was Lahren’s developing a film course at BSC. Using the Cinema 100 films as a “lab” for the class, Lahren helped

find the society a new home at the Sidney J. Lee Auditorium at BSC.

However, as the group began to expand and change, there was a need to find a better venue to showcase the films. In 1987, they found just that with the Grand Theatres, a relationship that continues to this day.

With the new home, Cinema 100 was able to expand the content they could show. Having been confined to showing 16mm films, the society was able to begin showing 35mm films as well.

Tragedy would once again strike the society though. First, in 2000, Halloran passed away. Five years later, Lahren, who was unofficially dubbed as president for life, also passed away, after a brief fight with a brain tumor.

However, members of their “core group” stepped up, and have continued to work to keep the society a living entity in the Mandan-Bismarck community.

### Evolution

Over the years, Cinema 100

continued to evolve. Having traditionally hosted only a winter/spring series, in 2002, the society decided to test out a fall series as well.

With an initial successful run, the fall series became a staple of the society. Centered primarily around a theme, it generally includes a showing of five films.

In 2003, the society moved to expand a bit more as well. Wanting to advance film as an art form in the state, Cinema 100 began a grant program. Offering financial support for a variety of projects, including the filming, producing, marketing and editing of a film, the society has made an impact on community.

Through the years, that group has also sponsored or co-sponsored a host of other events, including a “But the Book Was Better...” book/film discussion series, which the Friends of the Morton Mandan Public Library also co-sponsored.

# FOLLOWING ONE PATH OF A PHOTOGRAPHER

## Photographer's Journey Dustin White

Three years ago, I first picked up a camera as a photo journalist. While I had played around with photography on and off through the years, it was the first time I picked up a camera as part of my profession. I had a lot to learn, and I didn't realize all that would be expected of me. It was a wonderful first step.

As a photo journalist, I had the opportunity to meet a number of individuals in the community, as well as become more familiar with the area through attending various meetings and events. However, what I enjoyed most was the chance to explore photography in other regards, such as being able to capture both the landscape and the history of the places I frequented.

While in the past I had played around with cameras before, I was unprepared. I had read a few tutorials on various forms of photography, and my wife had taken a photography class in college, so I was able to learn through her experience. What I lacked though was my own experience.

Luckily, the community paper I worked for had the talent of Rick Scharf to make up for the areas in which I lacked. I remember my own first attempt at capturing a sports event. My shots continually came out much too dark. When one was bright enough, the scene was blurry.

After having taken hundreds of photos, over the course of a couple of hours, I came away with only a small handful that were worthwhile. Even then, they were nothing special. The experience did make me appreciate the work of Scharf all that much more though.

The only thing to do though was to learn from my mistakes. Eventually, I learned how to more effectively manipulate the controls on my camera, and thus



get the clear photo that I desired. However, good photography is much more than just being able to point a camera and press a button. It is about capturing a moment, and telling that story.

One of the best lessons I've learned over the last few years is that it can take time to capture the right moment. Granted, I could go to an event and just start snapping photos, and I would probably get some that turned out very well. However, there is an art form to the practice. There can also be a considerable amount of effort that goes into obtaining just that right photo.

That's not to say that only one photo is taken at each shoot though. After a day of taking pictures, I can often come back with a couple hundred photos. Many of them are often discarded straight away, as they only served as practice shots.

But there usually are still many photos that come out as imagined, and have to be weeded through. While the final product that winds up being published are only a couple of photos, dozens of others remain safely



*Dustin White photos*

**TOP: AFTER NEARLY A MILE HIKE UP IN THE BLACK HILLS OF SOUTH DAKOTA, THE SUN BEGAN TO SET, SPREADING LIGHT NICELY UPON A ROCK HIDDEN IN THE FOREST. BOTTOM: DRIVING NEAR THIS LOCATION DURING VISITS TO MY PARENTS, THIS SCENE HAS ALWAYS CAPTURED ME.**

on my computer's hard drive or on film strips.

To get those shots, I have found myself in a number of difficult positions. From having hiked through wooded areas, to crawling on my belly to get just the right angle, being a photo

journalist has not always been as simple as I once imagined. Luckily, I have a four-wheel-drive vehicle to get me out of some of the muddier places.

Yet, it's an experience that I wouldn't give up. Having devoted hundreds of hours to the

craft, continuing to learn from both my own experience, as well as studying as many sources as I can, I still have a long ways to go. But it is a path I'm ready to continue to travel, and hopefully share a bit along the way.



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