

# Opinion

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

**By Sen. Jeff Magrum**  
Committees look at Missouri River, audits of political subdivisions  
I want to wish everyone a blessed celebration of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead to create a path for our Salvation.  
Your North Dakota Legislative Interim water topics committee met recently. We discussed the issues and concerns going on with water in the state. The big issue is the southwestern states wanting our Missouri River water. Their goal is to get the current national government to let them pipe our water to the Colorado River to supplement

their water. This has been a re-occurring issue and one not likely to stop.  
Your Legislative Audit and Fiscal Review Committee met last week to go through audits of many different political subdivisions. Everything was better this time with the audits that we reviewed. Our state Auditor's office has been getting tough on corruption, so, hopefully, we will be getting more clean audit reports from our government agencies going forward. The North Dakota State Auditor's Office is our government watchdog for the people.  
Pore space, what is it? This is the subsurface of your land. It

runs to the center of the earth. Pore space cannot be severed from surface ownership unlike mineral rights. There is a lot of concern about the pore space right now as out-of-state corporations using federal tax credits are attempting to steal pore space from landowners. I will write a future report about this topic including an unconstitutional law called Amalgamation.  
Good Lords Blessings to you and your family.  
Sincerely,  
Sen. Jeff Magrum  
District 8

## THE FILM PURSUIT

### Racing the Chariots of Fire

**By Hunter Kamrath**  
"Ben-Hur" was a historical fiction film released in 1959 that starred Charlton Heston, Jack Hawkins, Stephen Boyd, Haya Harareet, and Hugh Griffith. The film was directed by William Wyler.  
Who knew that one loose tile on a roof could cause so much trouble? While a Roman governor and his procession are entering Judea, a loose tile from the roof crashes into the ground right where the governor and his horse are riding. Sure enough, in the middle of all the commotion, the horse gets spooked and throws the governor off. This whole situation was nothing short of an accident. A man named Messala, a Roman commander, investigates the scene and learns quickly it was a tragic accident. Instead, he blames his childhood friend, Judah Ben-Hur, a wealthy Jewish Prince. Judah is arrested without a fair trial and is sent to the galleys. The Romans also imprisoned his mother and sister. Ben-Hur is set on escaping prison life and getting revenge on Messala.  
Every Easter, I have a tradition of watching this incredible film. Most of the film's setting takes place during the end of Jesus' time on earth. One of

the reasons this film is one of my very favorites is how Jesus Christ is used in the film. Ironically, He has a very small part in the nearly four-hour movie. His face is never shown, and He doesn't even have a single line of dialogue throughout, but His role is so very important. The film has a lot of tragic themes like imprisonment, leprosy, and revenge. Jesus Christ represents hope and optimism in the story. When Ben-Hur is a galley slave, Jesus arrives and gives him water before the poor man dies of dehydration. Later in the film, Judah seems to be driven by hate and bitterness, and it's up to the Prince of Peace to resolve this in him.  
It wouldn't be right to discuss Ben-Hur without discussing one of the greatest scenes in movie history. Not long after the film's intermission, an epic chariot race occurs. This epic race is a giant visual spectacle. Set designers were tasked with building this enormous film set to bring the chariot arena/racetrack to life. At that time, it was the largest film set ever. Not only that, but another track identical in size had to be made right next to it where the horses could be trained, and the filmmakers could figure out how they wanted to film the

scene. To make the scene even more realistic, two of the film's big stars, Charlton Heston and Stephen Boyd, had to learn how to drive a chariot. The other charioteers were played by men who were experts in working with horses. The scene took a long five weeks to film and cost the filmmakers 1 million dollars to bring to life.  
Not only is the chariot race gorgeous to look at, but the film looks so authentic thanks to the incredible work by the set designers as well as the costume designers. The movie looks so realistic thanks to those elements.  
Composer Miklós Rózsa does an incredible job with the picture's soundtrack. The loud and boisterous feel really adds to many scenes making the entire movie feel like a giant event. Some film buffs believe this soundtrack still has an impact in movies today. My personal favorite composer, John Williams, has been said to have been greatly inspired by this film when composing music for films.  
"Ben-Hur" is one of my favorite films of all time thanks to the brilliant themes throughout with Jesus, the epic chariot race, the gorgeous film sets, and the brilliant soundtrack.

## THE GREAT ADVENTURE

### Spring brings...

**By Laura Gardner**  
Awe Spring! Birds, green grass, flowers, Easter, track, baseball, softball seasons and of course...prom season. Prom, to mothers it brings excitement, fathers collectively cringe, and wallets shudder! And this is where my husband and I have found ourselves. Lucky for us, this is a one-two punch. Two of our three daughters would be participating in the age-old high school formal. A neat twist as our oldest daughter was taking her middle sister as her date. Middle sister also gets to attend with a friend of hers at his school's prom later next month.  
Now we aren't new to prom as our son had attended several proms when he was in school and of course we had attended proms just a few years ago. We are, however, new to shopping for prom dresses. Holy guacamole, were we in for a wild ride. Shopping for a modest and reasonably priced prom dress is not for the faint of heart. It's unbelievable what passes for a prom dress these days. I swear there's Vegas Showgirls wearing more than what some designers were offering up as a prom dress. Crazier yet, was the price tag on this tiny fabric posing as a dress. I'm terrified to think someone, well probably a lot of someones, have purchased these scantily clad sparkly 'dresses' as why else would that style be offered?  
Lucky for us, we were able to find two dresses that wouldn't make their Dad suffer a small stroke or be uncomfortable if we ran into any religious lead-



ers while the girls were donning their fancy dresses. With some small modifications, a morning of primping and prepping, our girls were ready for their big formal dance. Of course first they had to endure the obligatory pictures, a fancy early supper, a gaming date at Tilt and no prom adventure is complete without a trip to Walmart. Fortunately, snowmageddon stayed somewhat mild to allow the festivities to be modified, but still continued.  
When we made it to the school, the gym had been transformed into the New York City Skyline. As we watched all the jazzed up and bejeweled smiling students, they not only looked sharp, but it was so nice to see a multitude of colorful fabric... and modest amounts of it! It was so nice to see that the crazy trends on the online dress shops and even some of the more revealing dress options in state didn't find their way to our prom. Loving once again that North Dakota is keeping with its own trends. I'm happy now that we have one prom down and no more dress shopping until next year!

## Accountability vs. future advancement

### The importance of printing meeting minutes

**By Kelli Ameling**  
**Associate Publisher**  
The publication of meeting minutes is a hot topic in North Dakota as a handful of government entities will have ballot measures this election cycle asking taxpayers if they want meeting minutes published in the newspaper.  
Every four years, under North Dakota Century Code, government entities place the measure on the ballot for voters to decide if they want meeting minutes to be published in the legal newspaper. This code is specifically in regards to publishing meeting minutes, as by law, government entities still have to publish all other public notices such as election information, budget information, bid notices etc.  
Recently, at a Washburn Commission meeting, two commissioners stated they were part of a county-wide push to re-word

the ballot measure to address the cost of publishing meeting minutes. At this meeting, the commissioners inaccurately stated they spent \$6,500 a year to publish meeting minutes and wanted the wording on the ballot to reflect that information. However, the commission president stated he wasn't comfortable with how the committee was going about things on a short-time frame, and the commission decided to leave the ballot this year, as is for the city.  
It turns out, misinformation was given to the committee and commissioners, and the city of Washburn actually had spent just over \$2,000 in 2023 publishing meeting minutes – about a third of the cost stated at a public meeting (you can read the full story in this week's Leader News).  
Yes, there is a price to publishing

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meeting minutes, legal rates are set by the state of North Dakota every two years – not the local newspapers. And, as much as newspapers do need and rely on that revenue, the cost is merely associated with the time and cost to actually process and print the minutes. The real reason for publishing the meeting minutes is to have an official record of accountability.

A push Washburn and other entities have made to move away from the publishing minutes is that posting minutes online are free. That is also not accurate.

Government entities have to keep in mind not just the cost of a website, but a host of one with enough space to hold years of records, the cost of time it takes to upload the documents and prepare the state-required paperwork like affidavits of publication stating they are available, equipment and the cost to stay up-to-date on that equipment for video recordings, making sure an IT employee is hired or bump the salary of an employee who will manage the recordings to make sure those are posted within the required time (and stay on top of the technology if a server/host were to go down) – all of this alone would cost an entity more than the roughly \$2,000 they are spending to publish meeting minutes.

Printing meeting minutes is a huge responsibility that is governed by the state.

Newspapers print the minutes as an unbiased third party. Once those meeting minutes are in print, there is no question if someone doctored and changed the minutes kept on file. This is a safety net for accountability of what took place at government meetings.

During the March 11 discussion at the city of Washburn, Commissioner Keith Hapip Jr., stressed the fact that even if meeting minutes were not to be published, the video and official meeting minutes would still be posted online and social media.

What third-party would be accountable to make sure video footage isn't lost or edited? What unbiased party is going to make sure meeting minutes aren't changed or doctored? Not to mention, we all know how technology can be – what if the internet or server goes down? Someone hacks the system? Or, something else happens where those videos and electronic information is just gone.

I would like to say we never have to worry about that in our county – but this scenario does

hit close to home as our sister paper experienced such an issue just last year with the city of Beulah.

Our Editor at that time wrote a story about a situation that didn't go by the books when it came to selecting a city attorney to head a project. Following the story a letter to the editor came, signed by the mayor, announcing the paper's inaccuracy. Beulah ran the letter, alongside a note from the Publisher sighting the exact time in the video that this indiscretion happened. The very next day the video of the meeting was taken down and the meeting minutes were altered to leave out the incident completely.

After the newspaper stood by the occurrence of what took place in the meeting, along with the original submission of meeting minutes to the newspaper, the video went back up online and the city was held accountable for their wrong doing.

This is an example, that took place in our backyard, on the importance of the publication of timely meeting minutes.

Yes, technology is advancing, and I will be the first to say I use it and rely on it, especially in regard to meeting coverage in the area when its available. It helps our newspaper be in multiple places at once to help provide as much information as possible to our readers.

I am strong believer in there will always be news, but how readers receive it will always be advancing. So, is this is a topic that needs to be addressed in regards to how meeting minutes are published for accountability and historical reasons – yes.

But we aren't there yet.

We cannot build a house without a foundation. We cannot advance in technology without making sure our standards for doing things the we have been doing them are addressed and those same standards can still be met as we transition into a new world of how people receive their information though technology.

Newspapers have to be a part of that foundation. Newspapers have to be a part of the discussion moving forward. Community journalism is still the backbone of communities they serve. Our goal is to provide you with accurate information to hold your county, city and school officials accountable, everyone always does their best when they are in the most light and we need to make sure that our officials stay in the light.

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Thank you for the outpouring of support for all those who attended, contributed, and donated. Special thanks to the Wilton Lions Club and Western Frontier Insurance and Ken Thompson with Four Winds Acution.

Thank you, Todd Newton

Cardinal Corner

Thursday, Mar. 28  
CNDC Indoor Track Meet @ Minot State

Friday, Mar. 29  
Good Friday: NO SCHOOL

Monday, April 1  
Easter Break: NO SCHOOL

Tuesday, April 2  
5/6 BBB vs Wilton 4:00 p.m.

5/6 VB TLM Triangular @ TL 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 3  
Kindergarten Screenings

Thursday, April 4  
5/6 VB vs Wilton 4:00 p.m.

Baseball vs C. Mclean 4:30 p.m.

Friday, April 5  
Region 7 Speech @ HMB

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- OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN, 447-2694. Worship 11 a.m. Sunday School 10 a.m.
- MERCER BAPTIST CHURCH. Pastor Paul Stout, Sunday School, 10 a.m. Worship, 11 a.m.

REGAN

- ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH, Rev. Steve Denn. Sunday School 10 a.m.; Morning Worship, 11 a.m.

RIVERDALE

- RIVERDALE COMMUNITY CHURCH, Pastor Alan Hathway; 463-2665, pastor's office. Sunday worship service, 9:00 a.m.
- ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, Pastor Van Vechten Crane. Sunday worship service, 11 a.m.

TURTLE LAKE

- ST. CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, Father Patrick Cunningham. Sunday Mass, 8:30 p.m.
- TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, Pastor Russ Lambert, 448-2551. Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m. Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.
- TL BAPTIST CHURCH, Steve Vetter, 448-2222. Prayer time, 9 a.m. Worship Service, 8:30 a.m.
- SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST, Pastor Casper du Plessis, 701-485-2698. SABBATH SCHOOL, 10 a.m. Church Service, 11:10 a.m.
- ST. OLAF LUTHERAN CHURCH, 448-2698. Worship, 9 a.m. Sunday School, 10 a.m.
- METHODIST CHURCH, Pastor Kayla Buckley 448-2277. Sunday Worship Service, 9 a.m.

UNDERWOOD

- FAITH EVANGELICAL CHURCH, Pastor Steve Gage; Family Worship 9:30 a.m.; Sunday School 11 a.m. We also offer a Facebook Live worship service through the church's Facebook group. Website: faithevangelicalunderwood.org.
- AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH, Worship Service, 10 a.m.
- FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD, Borchardt Ave. Morning Worship, 10 a.m.; WEDNESDAY: Kids Aflame Power Club and Youth Group, 6 p.m. Services on Underwood First Assembly of God Facebook.
- ST. BONAVENTURE CHURCH, Father Patrick Cunningham. Sunday Mass, 10:30 a.m.
- ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, Rev. Nathan Schieber. Worship Service, 9 a.m.
- TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, rural Pick City. Worship service, 11 a.m.

WASHBURN

- BIRKA LUTHERAN CHURCH, WORSHIP SERVICE, 8:30 a.m.
- FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, Interim Pastor Paul Krueger. 709 Fifth Ave., 462-3775. Worship Service, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:45 a.m.; Holy Communion first and third Sunday of each month. Easter Sunrise Service at 7:00 a.m. followed by a breakfast.
- ST. EDWIN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, Father Patrick Cunningham. Saturday mass 5:00 p.m. Rosary prayed 1/2 hour before services.
- UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, Pastor Annie Carlson 462-3220. Sunday School for preschool to sixth grade, 9:30 a.m., (Sept. thru May); Worship Service, 10:30 a.m.
- WASHBURN BAPTIST CHURCH, Pastor Rick Torkelson Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; Worship Service, 10:30 a.m.

WILTON

- FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Rev. Dr. Chuck Pedersen, Sunday: Morning Worship, 11 a.m.; Sunday School 10 a.m. for both children & adults. Thursday: Women's Bible Study, 1 p.m.
- MISSION EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH, 701-734-6959. Adult Sunday School 9:45 a.m.; Worship Service 10:45 a.m.; Awana, 6-7:30 p.m. Wednesdays during the school year.
- SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH. Sunday Mass/Eucharist, 8:30 a.m. Holy Days: As announced.
- SS PETER & PAUL UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, Rev. Fr. George Pruys. Saturday Confession, 4:00p.m.; Divine Liturgy, 4:30 p.m. Holy Days: As Announced. Good Friday Service at 6 p.m. Easter Saturday service at 4:30 p.m.
- SUNNE LUTHERAN CHURCH, Sunday School, 9 a.m.; Worship Service, 10 a.m.; Website: sunnelutheran.org.

WING

- BETHLEHEM EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, PASTOR TRISHA DE-BOER. Worship Service, 11 a.m. Communion celebrated on the first Sunday of each month and major festivals. Sunday School, 10 a.m.

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