



Guest Editorial:  
Earth Day

by Charlotte Franks-Erickson

"What? It's not my birthday!" This was a response that I received from a grocery store girl checking me out when I had said "Happy Earth Day" to her last year. She said "oh ... I think we did something for that when I was in third grade."

There didn't seem to be any other connection to one of the most significant movements of our time. She is not in the minority of folks who are in the second, third, fourth or fifth decade of their lives. The ignorance and non-compliance is staggering.

How can it be forgotten? People: We can't ease up! I speak for the generation responsible for its creation.

Earth Day was originally established by a Wisconsin senator, Gaylor Nelson, in 1970.

"The objective was to organize a national demonstration of concern for the environment so large that it would shake up the political establishment and force this issue onto the national agenda," recalled Senator Nelson. "It was a gamble, but it worked." - www.education-world.com

This source goes on, "At the time, Americans were slurping leaded gas through massive V8 sedans," states Earth Day Network. "Industry belched out smoke and sludge with little fear of legal consequences or even bad press." And there was a generation paying attention and noticing the effects on human health and the planet.

This is what the first Earth Day turned all around by a generation of young college kids who questioned and challenged the wrongs they saw in society and "actively" and passionately took action, including caring for the planet. Later in 1970 the Environmental Protection Agency was established, the Clean Air Act of 1970 was passed and within three years the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act were all passed!

Our planet was a wasteful mess, and today there are still millions of people who don't know anything about caring for our planet or they know but consider it an inconvenience to make any changes in their lifestyles. I worked at a place where I started a plastic bottle recycling program, and at times at the end of the day I would check a few wastebaskets by desks for plastic bottles and actually get a hostile reaction from a person who was still sitting at the desk and through gritted teeth said: "Oh that's right! You're doing that stuff!"

I've also heard, "Hey I've got some newspapers for you and a couple plastic bottles," like it was only a personal project of mine and no one else's. They never see that they can recycle the same way I do. City folks have curbside service for this, so how hard can that be?

I've heard excuses like recycling takes too much time, it takes too much space, I have to drive to a recycling center to drop off my plastic and paper, etc. I will add, it does much more than that, think about it!

I invite readers to google waste and recycling, how long it takes for trash to decompose, and how we're running out of landfill space no matter how far down we dig into Earth's basement.

Here are a few facts from the World Economic Forum:

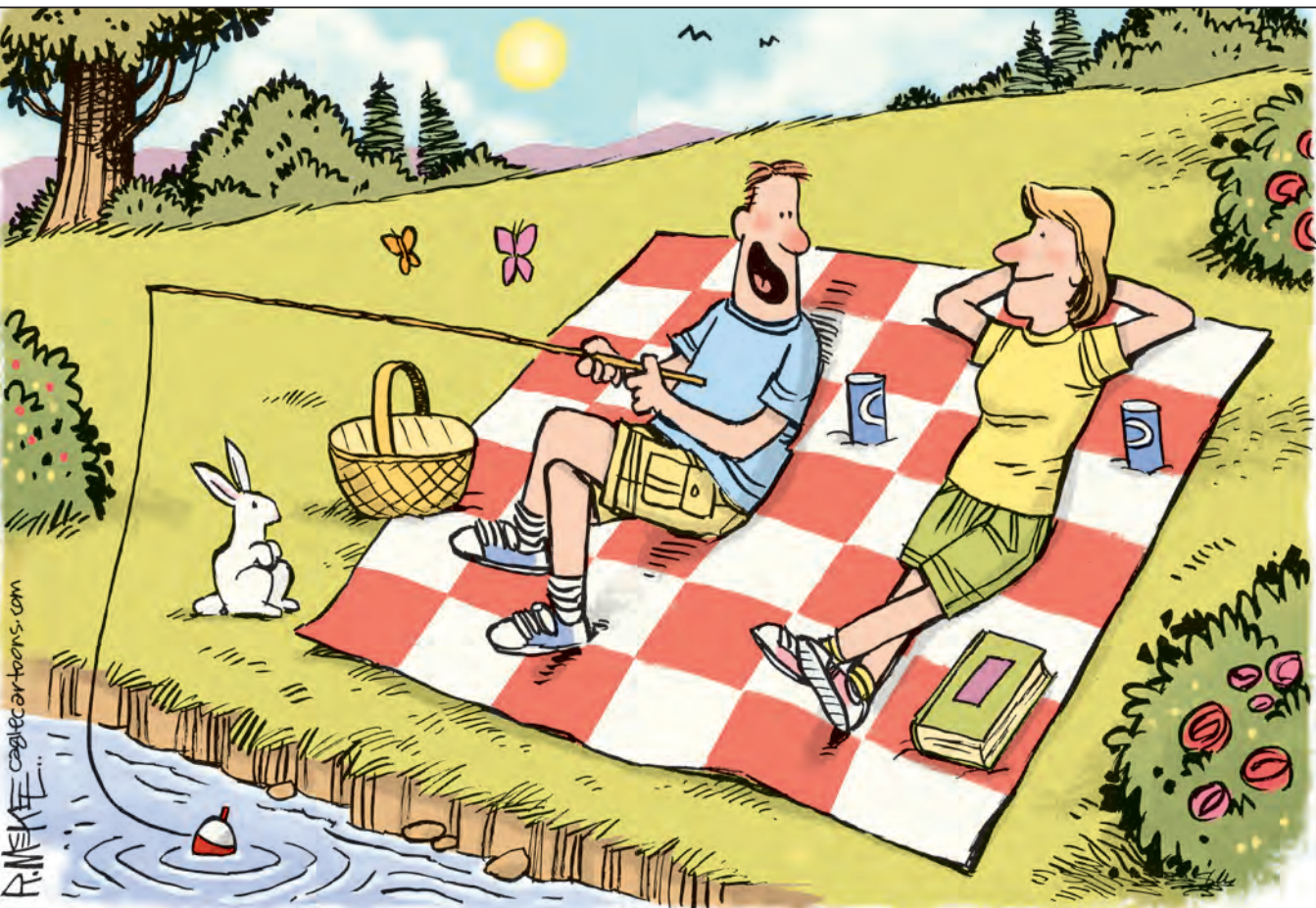
- Every hour, 2.5 million plastic bottles are thrown away in the United States
- Plastic bottles take up to 450 years to degrade
- 7 million tons of aluminum are still not recycled and only one-third of 110 million glass bottles that are thrown away gets recycled

Are you going to keep taking without replacing, recycling and/or restoring?

Do you want a planet for our future or are you planning to move to Mars or Jupiter?

Charlotte Franks-Erickson is a native of Moorhead, Minn. who moved to Sheyenne the summer of 1976. She currently lives on a farm a few miles outside of Sheyenne with her husband where they raised their three children.

She is a semi-retired teacher having been in education for nearly 35 years. Currently she teaches art to students in grades K-8 at the Oberon school and works with their special events and publicity. She takes pride in the fact that she was on campus at Moorhead State (now MSU Moorhead) for the first Earth Day.



"WHAT A GREAT DAY! THE SUN IS SHINING, THE BIRDS ARE SINGING, AND WE'RE IN A CARTOON THAT'S NOT ABOUT TRUMP!..."



Newspapers thankful  
for legislative votes

by Cecile Wehrman, NDNA

On the whole, North Dakota legislators understand the importance of newspapers and their actions during the 2025 legislative session show it.

Legislators protected the publication of county minutes in newspapers, voting down a bill that would have given the option to post them only on county websites; voted to keep highway bid notices in newspapers rather than only posting them on trade or government agency websites; restored the historic practice of spreading publication of insurance abstracts across all newspapers in the state instead of just eight; passed a postal resolution asking for better delivery service for newspapers and consumers alike; and on Wednesday passed a bill that gives legal weight to www.ndpublicnotices.com, a website maintained by the North Dakota Newspaper Association.

SB 2069 was the first bill I testified on back on January 9, and the last of the five bills passed among those we were most concerned about. The bill provides two backstops for legal no-

tices in the rare instance a newspaper fails to publish a notice, counting a notice at ndpublicnotices.com as well as a notice on a state agency website, as fulfilling legal notice - while leaving requirements for publication of print notices in place.

Because I wrote on this topic earlier in the session, it's important to let people know what is NOT happening.

The state will NOT be developing a public notice website capable of cutting newspapers out of public notice placements at some future point. It was, however, a discussion among some legislators who saw this bill as a way to take a step toward eliminating the costs of publishing notices in newspapers.

When you know there are people in government who feel notices in newspapers have no value, it can seem like your house is on fire.

But the votes on some of the bills I mentioned above show that, by and large, legislators support upholding newspapers as the vehicle for delivering public notices.

Just look at some of these tallies: HB 1380, the county minutes on the web bill, failed in the House 80-13; HB 1398, restoring the historical abstract publication process, passed in the House 86-6; and SB 2069, though it had a closer vote in the Senate - possibly due to some confusion since we opposed it originally - passed in the House 72-17. SB 2062, taking highway bids out of newspapers, failed 89-4.

That feels, to me, like an incredible showing of support for the importance of public notices in newspapers.

Now, 73 privately owned businesses operating newspapers can breathe a sigh of relief, along with voters.

We know citizens give overwhelming support to the concept of a trusted third party like newspapers having oversight of public notices.

SB 2069 as passed will now solve the issue of a public hearing needing to be rescheduled because one out of a dozen or more papers required to publish it had a miss.

I wish I could say newspapers are perfect, but every business occasionally has a hiccup due to illness, death, employee turnover - heck, even a cyber attack - which can cause highly consequential notices to be missed.

You'll still never convince me that a website alone is where public notices should be placed, because the mechanism for people to see them is much different than for people sitting down with a newspaper delivering news about their community along with notices about the government actions that may impact them.

However, in the end, SB 2069 is a good compromise - providing an alternate avenue for people to learn of a pending hearing when unforeseen disruptions impact newspapers, while leaving alone the printed newspapers' supremacy as the trusted place to access public notices in North Dakota.

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We the People

by David Adler

Indiscriminate DOGE cuts harm the states, humanities, history and culture

DOGE is not what it purports to be. The indiscriminate, arbitrary cuts across dozens of federal agencies reflect neither its advertisement of efficiency nor its promise to root out waste and fraud. The use of a chainsaw to reduce government spending - for the sake of cutting government spending - does not produce meritorious results of the sort that the employment of reason, discernment and measurement of programs based on their value and service to the nation would achieve, if officials were true to their stated goal of reducing unwise and wasteful spending. The

results of the intemperate approach rather, have been the infliction of the sort of carnage wrought by a wanton Florida hurricane that leaves a wide swath of pain, suffering and destruction that requires years of rebuilding and restoration. The exacting toll of the DOGE chainsaw on the life of America and the lives of Americans may be incalculable unlike, say, a business plan for spending reduction which implements a cost-benefit analysis that includes in its calculus the origins, purpose, utility and impact of a program and what its retention or elimination might mean for the organization.

After three months of blind cuts to governmental programs, without evidence

of waste and fraud, we find ourselves observing a funeral parade that includes libraries, museums, the arts and humanities, scientific research and medical assistance, and a diminished capacity for fighting disease and wildfires. That's not all. The elimination of USAID has hurt American farmers and the most vulnerable abroad. The elimination of inspectors general in numerous departments has removed those who hold governmental officials accountable. DOGE has cut VA benefits and staff and impaired our national security and national defense. The Trump-Musk cuts at the Center for Disease Control included the elimination of the team in charge of researching IVF treatments, despite President Trump's promise to expand access to those fertility treatments which, he has stated, would brand him as the "fertilization president."

The DOGE decision to gut the National Endowment for

the Humanities entails tragic consequences for Humanities North Dakota, a state treasure for its leadership in civic and cultural education. Humanities North Dakota, like other state councils across the nation, relies on NEH funding and may need to close its doors, according to press reports. The NEH grant of \$900,000 to the non-profit North Dakota organization for the 2025 fiscal year was axed immediately. Humanities North Dakota offers throughout the state a series of online classes, book talks, lectures and a learned and stimulating summer conference on civics education with a focus on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights for high school and middle school social science teachers. Staff members have been planning an educational celebration in 2026 of the Declaration of Independence on the occasion of its 250th anniversary. Will this foundational event in the nation's history

pass in North Dakota without celebration because of devastating spending cuts? In this deeply divisive time, civics education is indispensable to building bridges and forging understanding, tolerance and compromise - the essential ingredients for maintaining our democracy and civil society. Little thought went into the decision to decimate funding for the NEH, which has grave implications for the future of civics education in North Dakota.

DOGE is not a governmental department, and violates various provisions of the Constitution. Under the Constitution, Congress alone possesses the authority to create an office. Manifestly, Congress did not pass a law creating DOGE, yet it proceeds with the authorization and approval of President Trump, despite the president's aggrandizement of congressional power. The role and authority attributed to Musk would, by any

measure, elevate him to the status of a "principal" officer which, under the Appointments Clause in Article II of the Constitution requires Senate approval, a function of its Advice and Consent authority. Musk has not been nominated to an office, and thus his sweeping power represents yet another instance of executive aggrandizement. Finally, the actions of DOGE violate the appropriations power, vested exclusively in Congress. DOGE's decision to rescind funds authorized by Congress, including those funds directed to the NEH, and then sent onto Humanities North Dakota, represents a rank usurpation of congressional spending power. For readers concerned about the future of Humanities North Dakota and the preservation of the Constitution, here are three flagrant violations that may ignite your passions.



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