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North Dakota Intelligencer: July 5, 1993

Mike Jacobs
Grand Forks Herald

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The
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Intelligencer

An inside report on people, politics & power

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Volume 2

July 5, 1993

Number 7

Turmoil in the land of ivory towers

Higher education finds itself with three lame ducks

A few days after the Board of Higher Education's June 24 meeting in Williston, Chancellor **Douglas Treadway** appeared on a Fargo radio talk show and gave a speech at NDSU.

His theme was that higher education should become more entrepreneurial, modeling itself after the business world, to compete in a global economy and maintain educational quality even as state budgets are cut.

Fair enough, but doesn't it beg the question? What corporation's board of directors, when dissatisfied with the performance of a top executive, would give him two years to wrap things up and clean out his desk?

In effect, that's what the board did when it agreed to early retirement for NDSU President **Jim Ozburn**. Ozburn will retire as of June 30, 1995, as will Bismarck State College President **Kermit Lidstrom**. Dickinson State President **Albert Watrel** leaves as of June 30, 1994. (Note, if you will, that in print Ozburn's and Watrel's departures were predicted first and only in *The Intelligencer*.)

Treadway insists that Ozburn's decision was his own, and no one was forced out. More likely is that the arrangement seemed a diplomatic middle ground between a harsh, conflict-laden firing and the unacceptable status quo. Ozburn contends he now can turn his energies to the serious challenges facing NDSU without a lot of second-guessing; he won't be "looking over his shoulder," Treadway says.

Perhaps, but several key legislators marveled privately at the implications of a lame-duck president. Come 1995, Ozburn could still be at the helm of NDSU when the university system comes before the Legislature for its appropriations. His lieutenants won't have his institutional authority backing them up; they, too, could appear to be lame ducks.

These arrangements puzzle many in the public, but even more confusing is the fact the higher education system will have to buy out Ozburn's tenure. According to the early retirement system, the board could pay up to a year of Ozburn's salary to compensate him for the tenure — in this case, about \$100,000.

Presidents, academic vice presidents and deans all have tenure, even though they serve now in administrative positions. It's a tough call, one about which several board members have expressed doubt. An ongoing study of tenure will review the topic.

In reality, hiring out-of-state administrators simply requires awarding tenure. Otherwise, North Dakota cannot compete with the rest of the county. But, since no disgraced or worn-out administrator will stay on campus to teach in the tenured position, the scheme amounts to a golden parachute. (Can you imagine Ozburn remaining at NDSU to teach? Neither he nor the new administration would welcome that.)

All this suggests that Ozburn probably will leave NDSU before the announced retirement date, once he finds another position. Under that scenario, he won't appear to have been forced out directly. Face will have been saved all around.



Republicans make a bid for unity

Upon his unanimous election as GOP chairman, Fargo businessman and 1992 congressional candidate **John Korsmo** told everyone at the Republican Round Up in Jamestown to pick up a pen. Then he gave them his phone numbers, home and office.

"The next time you hear a rumor about what's going on at state headquarters, the next time you hear how **John Von Rueden** has screwed up, the next time you hear about how we owe all these people money, the next time you hear about how so and so said this and such, before you say it to anybody else, give me a call to find out if it's true," Korsmo said.

The comments came after a plea for party unity, and it's not a huge leap to conclude the GOP has suffered from some rumor-mongering and back-biting.

Korsmo mentioned all the talk about **Jim Kasper**, the Fargo insurance man and anti-abortion politico, who supposedly was going to challenge Korsmo for chairman. That just never was true, the new chairman said. (Korsmo did single Kasper out for praise in his acceptance speech.)

Plenty of other topics have served as grist for the rumormill, former Chairman **Kevin Cramer's** future and party finances probably heading the grist list. The GOP ended the 1992 election cycle \$50,000 in debt, not an outrageous figure, really, especially with a new Republican governor.

But a study on campaign operations chaired by Bismarck lawyer **Warren H. "Duke" Albrecht**, last year's attorney general candidate, pointed to some basic structural flaws.

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GRAND FORKS, ND 58202
GOP: Please turn to Page 2

GOP: Making a bid for unity

Continued from Page 1

brecht termed the study a "no-holds-barred exercise which attempted to peel away any layers of a status quo which threatened to inhibit improvement of the campaign operations of our state party."

Contributors just aren't sure how the party uses their money, which promotes doubt, the report stated:

"In practical terms, the State Party must initiate a program of fund-raising efforts which informs contributors of the stated goal of the fund-raising effort, e.g. whether the contributions are to be utilized for party overhead or specific campaigns or candidates or some combination of the three. In the past, monies raised through various fund-raising programs of the State Party (such as the 2400 Club or the Victory Club) have been haphazardly applied toward different overhead expenses or campaign funds on an ad hoc basis, depending on the exigencies of the moment. Management principles should be applied, not only to the operations of the State Party headquarters, but also to these diverse fund-raising efforts."

And, since the GOP convention, a major fund-raising event, comes every other year, finances tend to be inconsistent. The report further stated that, in some campaign years, overhead for party headquarters has not allowed for reserves for future candidates.

Other problems the report details are the absence of an up-to-date, computerized voter list and occasional poor relationships with the media. Candidates must be recruited and trained as soon as possible, it argues. Finally, district parties must finance the state party; the report called for a base quota of \$2,500 each campaign cycle.

Since Korsmo will be an unpaid volunteer — not even taking expenses — one of his first jobs will be to line up new headquarters staff whose management can improve these affairs. **Jeff Larson, Allen Olson's** campaign manager in 1984, has been running the show since May, but he does not want to stay. (It would be a step backward from Bush-Quayle regional director last year, and he's a Minneapolis resident. Expect him to join or help found a campaign consulting firm.)

Korsmo says the new staff structure may not have an executive director, per se. That would be unusual.

North Dakota's best, according to salary

Effective July 1, state employees became eligible for their \$60 per month raise approved by the 1993 Legislature. The timing is thus appropriate to take a fresh look at a list of the top-paid state workers.

Nothing too unusual leaps out from the list. The State Hospital (SH) typically has the highest salaries, since psychiatry is a well-paid profession requiring extensive, specialized education and a medical degree.

Several items need clarification, however. The \$60 monthly raise translates into \$720 annually. The Board of Higher Education approved that amount for its employees, including professors on nine-month contracts. In effect, they receive \$80 per month raises.

This has been standard practice, although apparently not one fully understood at the Legislature. Senate Appropriations Chairman Sen. **Harvey Tallackson, D-Grafton**, was surprised when told of the \$80 figure.

Presidents at UND and NDSU also receive free housing.

State elected officials did not receive the monthly raises, falling victim to the right-sizing politics of the moment. They are, however, eligible for the authorized 3 percent raise for 1994-95 if internal savings are made in their agencies.

Finally, the raises do not affect the 116 employees at the State Mill and Elevator in Grand Forks, who operate on a profit-sharing plan just like private industry. A semolina price war has cut drastically into profits this year, so there won't be bonuses. (**Roger Dunning** continues to make the \$100,000 annual salary he has since being hired as general manager.)

These salaries are taken from a May 7th run from Central Personnel. To obtain the current salary, add \$720.

Enrique Alvarez, physician, SH, \$147,696.

Karl Ulrich, superintendent, SH, \$143,004.

Glenn Statler, chairman, plant pathology, NDSU, \$133,760.

Igmidio Santos, physician, SH, \$130,524.

Edwin James, dean, UND Med School, \$130,480.

Douglas Treadway, chancellor, university system, \$125,479.

Reynaldo Aligada, physician, SH, \$125,280.

John Hoeven, president, Bank of North Dakota, \$125,000.

Clayton Jensen, professor, UND Med School, \$121,276.

James Clinkenbeard, physician, SH, \$120,072.

Thomas Converse, physician, SH, \$120,000.

Erlinda Mercado, physician, SH, \$120,000.

Alan Broadhead, physician, SH, \$119,604.

Pierre Veuthey, physician, SH, \$119,604.

Calixto Punzalan, physician, SH, \$119,604.

Dennis Kottke, physician, SH, \$119,604.

Jesus Ortiz, physician, SH, \$119,604.

Gordon Abbo, physician, SH, \$119,604.

Andrew McLean, physician, SH, \$115,068.

Kendall Baker, UND president, \$115,000.

Richard Gray, professor UND Med School, \$110,000.

Jon Rice, state health officer, \$110,000.

Thomas Norris, professor UND Med School, \$105,000.

Richard Olafson, professor, UND Med School, \$103,737.

David Antonenko, professor UND Med School, \$101,552.

Richard Stadter, UND professor, \$99,306.

Elected State Officials

Gov. **Ed Schafer**, \$68,284.

Attorney General **Heidi Heitkamp**, \$58,408.

Lt. Gov. **Rosemarie Myrdal**, \$56,116.

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Wayne Sanstead, \$52,792.

Secretary of State **Al Jaeger**, \$51,752.

State Auditor **Robert Peterson**, \$51,752.

State Treasurer **Kathi Gilmore**, \$51,752.

Agriculture Commissioner **Sarah Vogel**, \$51,752.

Insurance Commissioner **Glenn Pomeroy**, \$51,752.

Tax Commissioner **Bob Hanson**, \$51,752.

Public Service Commissioner **Bruce Hagen**, \$51,752.

Public Service Commissioner **Leo Reinbold**, \$51,752.

Public Service Commissioner **Susan Wefald**, \$51,752.

Labor Commissioner **Craig Hagen**, \$51,272.

Schafer's top appointees and staff:

Dr. **Jon Rice**, state health officer, \$110,000.

Henry "Bud" Wessman, director of human services, \$84,996.

Chuck Stroup, director of economic development and finance, \$80,000.

Rod Backman, OMB director, \$68,004.

Marshall Moore, director, department of transportation, \$65,000.

Robert Harms, governor's counsel, \$64,992.

Diane Alm, director of workers compensation, \$60,000.

Carol Olson, governor's chief of staff, \$56,544.

Doug Eiken, parks director, \$52,800.

Gary Preszler, banking director, \$52,272.

K.L. Cool, game and fish director, \$52,000.

The tax vote: Preview of '94

GOP National Committeeman **Bernie Dardis** criticized Sen. **Kent Conrad**, D-N.D., for voting for the gas tax. An amendment keeping it at 4-plus cents passed by a 50-48 vote, and Dardis said Conrad was the deciding vote.

Clinton's budget is clearly going to be THE campaign issue in the 1994 Senate race, even more so if the economy takes a dive. But the focus on a gas tax is problematic. At less than 5 cents, it's not that big of an increase; North Dakota legislators wanted a 3-cent hike in the state gas tax.

And Conrad's line is that it spared the state the horrible Btu tax, which it probably did. He was willing to accept a 6-cent increase, which shows he regarded even that much politically palatable at home.

Tough competition

The North Dakota Centennial Trees Commission passed over former Legislative Council and Human Resources Department Director **John Graham** when it hired a new executive director. **Richard Gilmore** of Bottineau got the job. He's married to state treasurer **Kathi Gilmore**. Another candidate for the job was **Phil Parks**, former state dairy commissioner. **Dennis Neumann** left the job to go to work for Prairie Public Television in Bismarck.

Tough month for Byron

It's been a little rough mediawise for Sen. **Byron Dorgan**, D-N.D., in the last month. First **Jay Leno** included him in a skit mocking congressional haircuts. Then, ABC PrimeTime featured Dorgan in a teaser on a report condemning the expense of "special orders," those after-hours talks that some representatives engage in when the House is empty. He was shown talking in the well, as the announcer intoned, "The high cost of hot air in Washington."

The association was unfair. Dorgan was never an abuser of the special orders, droning on purely for the cameras.

Toss of the coin

Luck is running for **John Gosbee**, the Mandan lawyer leading the latest referral drive against seatbelts. At the Republican Round Up in Jamestown, he was challenged as a regional chairman for the southwest by **Mel Beckler**, a party activist from Hazen.

The vote was 6-6, so a coin flip was held. Gosbee won, just as he did two

Hall talk

years ago, when **Tove Mandigo** also tied him. Gov. **Ed Schafer's** office manager, Mandigo flipped the coin this time.

Young Republican

Hanging out at the Round Up was **Chad McCabe**, a youngish Grand Forks city councilman and UND law student. He's expressing interest in running for state auditor in 1996, assuming **Bob Peterson** retires. McCabe's license plates suggest a higher goal. They read, "Senate."

(McCabe was active in the UND Student Senate in past years.)

Spaeth divorced

The Bismarck Tribune caused a bit of a stir by reporting the divorce between former Attorney General **Nick Spaeth** and his wife, **Laurie**, filed in Mercer County, is now final. The Associated Press did not pick up the story. Spaeth is now the Fargo attorney for Dorsey and Whitney, while Laurie will pursue her medical career in California.

Spaeth featured the family prominently in television commercials during his 1992 race for governor.

Apparently the Tribune also was working on a story about the divorce of **H.F. "Sparky" Gierke**, now a federal military court of appeals judge, but editors spiked the piece.

Editorial change

Liz Fedor will be the new editorial page editor at the Grand Forks Herald, replacing **Dan Rylance**, who will follow his wife to the University of Illinois. Fedor worked for the Herald from 1981 to 1986, covering Minnesota politics.

She later worked for the Northwest Minnesota Initiative Fund, an arm of the philanthropic McKnight Foundation. More recently still, she worked for the Minnesota state government's Commission on Reform and Efficiency.

The hire marks a departure for the Herald. Previous editorial writers have been North Dakota political veterans. Rylance is a former legislator; **Tim Fought**, now managing editor of the Herald, and **Steve Schmidt**, now higher education reporter at the paper, covered politics.

Herald Editor **Mike Jacobs**, a for-

mer political reporter, will have to hold up the North Dakota side of the editorial equation, at least until Fedor learns the ropes west of the river.

Architectural coup

Three architects from North Dakota State University won an important Chicago architectural competition. **Lawrence Carcoana**, **Jim Nelson** and **Don Faulkner** were unanimous winners of the Chicago Tribune's contest to redesign Chicago's notorious Cabrini-Green housing project. Nelson and Faulkner team-teach urban architecture at NDSU; Carcoana, a Romanian immigrant, is their student. Said Faulkner of the anomalous victory of a team from the nation's most rural state, "It's a surprise, isn't it?"

Keller is gone

Cliff Keller is out as executive director of the North Dakota Heritage Foundation. **Connie Johnson** is in. Keller quit after the foundation's board of directors presented a list of unattainable goals. He'd headed the private fund-raising affiliate of the State Historical Society of North Dakota since 1976. His resignation follows a shake-up on the board that resulted in election of **Barb Lang** of Jamestown as president. She replaced Keller loyalist **Karl Limvere**, also of Jamestown, who continues as vice president.

Hruby hretires

The Capitol was abuzz June 30 when news broke that KFYR-Radio's talk show host, **John Hruby**, would be retiring July 16. His "What's on Your Mind" often takes a political turn, and its 10 a.m.-to-noon time slot is said to have the largest audience in the state.

So, politicians listen and occasionally appear on the show, but it's held in low regard by movers and shakers. Hruby's approach is to be a talk show cipher, agreeing with whatever the caller suggests and rarely challenging the accuracy of the claims. (For that reason, it can become a tool for campaigns during election season. **Lyndon LaRouche** is also a highly regarded guest.)

Hruby, 49, has been with KFYR for 23 years. His business interests in Wilton allow him to retire. He'll be replaced by **Mark Armstrong**, a morning radio host — "The Phil and Mark Show" — who has a solid background in news.

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GF base escapes this time, but the 1995 round looms

The next round of closures could find Minot, GF pitted against each other

The good news for North Dakota's economy is that the Grand Forks Air Force Base has escaped closure. The bad news can be summed up in two words: "For now."

For there's no telling what 1995 will bring, other than renewed risk for both Minot and Grand Forks when the Base Closure and Realignment Commission undertakes its final round of base reviews.

Certainly, reason can be found for worry. Once a base has been placed on the closure list — as Grand Forks was — the commission habitually places it on the next round's list. As folks in Plattsburgh, N.Y., tell us, other communities see you as vulnerable, so they lobby to put you there.

Then comes the testimony of **James Boatright**, deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force. He suggested that 1995 could see Minot and Grand Forks pitted against each other in competition to remain open. **Wally Beyer**, chairman of the Minot save-the-base effort, calls the comments pure speculation. Still, it doesn't seem politically realistic that North Dakota can emerge from the process unscathed while other states take major hits. That's especially true since the Navy lost 41 sites, while the Army lost 1 and the Air Force 4.

Republican Gov. **Carrol Campbell** of South Carolina thinks the Navy picked on Charleston because the congressional delegation is small, with relatively little political power. The same might be said of North Dakota. (Campbell's theory doesn't explain why California got decimated, though.)

The issues are difficult to discuss, for one fears being condemned as unsupportive of the bases, or even blamed if one ever shuts down. Besides, the military-oriented argu-

Business beat

ments that kept Grand Forks open this year still have merit.

But pessimistic thoughts have to be going through the minds of business owners planning their investments, payroll and expansions for the next two to five years. After Grand Forks was a surprise addition to the list, the housing market immediately slowed down. Now, since both cities face an uncertain future, businesspeople simply have to be wary. That caution could reverberate throughout the state's economy.

Base closings have not been quite as catastrophic for some communities as predicted. In early 1990, England Air Force Base near Alexandria, La., appeared on a closure list. Economic doom was predicted. Yet now housing prices are up, and job growth is steady.

The June 22 Wall Street Journal reports how it was done:

"Like a person shaken to his senses, Alexandria's business leaders started preparing for life after England Air Force Base nearly a year before learning that the facility would close. They took pains to keep normally contentious politicians united. They applied political pressure to gain control of the base itself. And they forced their way through the military bureaucracy to get a major tenant working on the property before it even closed last December — a huge boost to the area's morale."

North Dakota's base advocates are split on the issue of planning publicly for the future without the military, as some worry it could become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Discussions will go on, but sub rosa.

One other troubling point: If the Minot or Grand Forks bases appear on the list two years from now, the communities will find themselves behind other states in the competition for replacement industries. And North Dakota cannot afford the huge financial incentives that other states can.

Fortnightly update

The American Phytopathological Society honored North Dakota plant scientist **Harold Flor**, who died in 1991, for his lifelong work on plant pathogens — viruses, fungi, bacteria and nematodes — at NDSU. . . . UND will cut public funding to two bureaus — the Bureau of Governmental Affairs and the Bureau of Economic Research. The bureaus will be forced to subsist on the money they can pull in on their own. . . . Lt. Col. **Patricia Fornes** became the first woman to head a nuclear missile squadron when she was sworn in as leader of the 740th at Minot Air Force Base. . . . Residents of Whitestone Hill Township, near Gwinner, rejected a proposal from USA Waste Services Inc. to expand a local landfill in order to bid for municipal waste from outside the state. . . . Prairie Public Television President **Dennis Falk** was named national public broadcasting manager of the year. . . . Valdak Corp. of Grand Forks was fined \$17,500 by the U.S. Labor Department for violating the child labor law. The investigation began when a 15-year-old boy's arm was severed in an accident at one of the company's car washes. **Josh Zimmerman's** arm was reattached and he is beginning to regain some use of it. . . . Minot's Dr. **Mark Selland**, who has researched the body's ability to adapt to high altitudes, recently climbed Mount Everest. . . . A coalition of environmental groups appealed a U.S. Forest Service decision to grant a permit for an oil well in a proposed wilderness area in the Badlands. . . . Longtime Cass County Reporter Publisher **Marge Potter** died. She was 74. . . . Gov. **Ed Schafer** appointed his wife, **Nancy Schafer**, to the North Dakota Council on the Arts. . . . Amoco is seeking quick approval for a proposed pipeline that would bring up to 10,000 barrels of crude oil a day from Canada to the company's Mandan, N.D., refinery. . . . Fargo Mayor **Jon Lindgren** proclaimed the last week of June Gay-Lesbian Awareness Week in Fargo. It's the ninth consecutive year for Lindgren's controversial proclamation. . . . A law requiring North Dakotans to buckle up was suspended and will be put to a statewide vote as the result of referral petitions filed with the state. . . . Fargo lawyer **John Schneider**, former legislator and House Democratic leader, was nominated to become North Dakota's next U.S. attorney. . . . It may cost Minot \$1.5 million or more to clean up its old landfill. . . . Former state Health Officer **Robert Wentz** was named deputy state insurance commissioner.