

## Springfield Organic Farm A Popping Success

BY RANDY TRAMP  
P&D Correspondent

SPRINGFIELD — Things are popping on the Namminga farm west of Springfield.

Ernie Namminga, farmer and director for Bon Homme Electric, started growing organic popcorn in 2010. Of the 600 acres he farms, 39 acres produce organic popcorn. Those acres see no pesticides or herbicides in the farming process.

Namminga states that to be USDA certified the ground had to be commercial fertilizer free for at least three years. Prior to 2007, the ground was grassland so it passed the USDA qualifications. That was just one of the requirements for certification. He has to pass an annual inspection and fill many pages of paperwork every year to be certified by OneCert.

The untreated seeds for planting must also be approved and certified. The seed cannot be genetically modified organism (GMO). This refers to plants and animals with an altered genetic make-up by a non-natural means in order to incorporate genes from another organism.

Namminga has several options to purchase the seeds: Blue River Seed, Albert Lee Seed House and Schlessman Seed.

Planting season starts around mid-May, depending on the weather. Five days after planting the popcorn, the field is harrowed.



COURTESY PHOTO  
**Ernie Namminga started growing organic popcorn in 2010. Of the 600 acres he farms, 39 acres produce organic popcorn.**

"Weeds are a big problem when raising organic food," Namminga said.

During the season, he uses a rotary hoe on the crop a couple of times and cultivates it twice.

At the present time, Namminga farms 80 percent organic on his land. (He said his goal is to go to 100 percent organic.)

Besides popcorn he also raises organic soybeans, field corn and alfalfa.

Extra work is required to raise organic foods.

## Sing

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was substituting at school that day came and got me and took me to the library where she told me. I was so excited. Then the school announced it and made a very big deal out of it, too. It was very exciting."

The concert at Carnegie Hall will be held June 27 and will cap a four-day experience in New York City.

"I am excited to get to see New York," Sophia said. "I like enclosed spaces and I like skyscrapers, so I plan to take it all in. I want to meet people from across the world. So I hope I get to room with people from across the nation."

For her parents, letting their young daughter travel and experience this was something they considered but, after looking into the arrangements, knew would be an opportunity for her to learn and grow.

"We are going to go out and be part of it through their family program," Cindy said. "Most of the rehearsals will be right there in their hotel. They will have chaperones and a guard on their floor in the hotel. When it comes to the

sightseeing aspects, I know they will be something Sophia will really enjoy."

Trips to the Statue of Liberty, a double-decker bus tour, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and back stage at Carnegie Hall will be just a few of the tours Sophia and her family have on their agenda.

"I can't wait to people-watch and sight-see," Sophia said. "I want to take it all in. When it comes to the bus, I am going to be on the top."

Sophia said she will receive the music for the concert in the next few weeks. From there, it will be up to her and Nelson to learn the parts.

"This is just the highest honor on the student level I can think of," Nelson said. "I have had students go to honors choir at the state level and that is an amazing accomplishment. This is just the next level because it is international. I hope she learns a lot from it, meets new friends and takes in the culture and history of New York when she is there."

To follow Shauna on Twitter go to [www.twitter.com/shauna.marlette](http://www.twitter.com/shauna.marlette). To comment on this story go to [www.yankton.net](http://www.yankton.net).

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## OBITUARIES

### S. Andree

#### Mechtenberg OSB

S. Andree Mechtenberg OSB, age 83, died on Good Friday, April 3, 2015.

A wake service will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, April 6, 2015 and the Funeral Mass will be celebrated on Tuesday, April 7, at 10:00 a.m., both in Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel in Yankton, South Dakota. Burial will be in the monastery cemetery. Arrangements are under the direction of the Wintz & Ray Funeral Home and Cremation Service in Yankton.

Dorothy Mechtenberg was born April 16, 1931 at Parkston, South Dakota to Theodore and Rose (Wermers) Mechtenberg, the second of five children. She had fond memories of growing up in Dimock and Parkston, South Dakota. She graduated from Parkston High School in 1949, and started nurses training at Sacred Heart School of



Mechtenberg

Nursing. After five weeks of school, she entered Sacred Heart Monastery October 7, 1949.

She became a novice June 28, 1950 and received the name Andree. She made first profession on June 29, 1951, and continued her nursing education. Sister Andree made perpetual profession on June 29, 1954. That same year she received her RN and was assigned to St. Thomas More Hospital in Canon City, Colorado. After two years in Canon City, she returned to Yankton to work at Sacred Heart Hospital and in 1957 trained for anesthesia. In 1958, she returned to Canon City as operating room supervisor and anesthetist, a position she held until 1972. Returning to Yankton, she completed her Bachelors of Science in An-

esthesia from Mount Marty College in 1974, returning to St. Thomas More Hospital as a nurse anesthetist until 1981. She then began ministry in Home Health and Hospice, and later became the director of the program in 1984. She considered this ministry a gift from God as she cared for the sick and dying and formed lasting friendships with her co-workers. She continued this sacred ministry until she returned to Yankton in 1991. S. Andree ministered as Infirmarian at the monastery infirmary from 1991 to 2001. In her later years, she was an assistant to the elderly and led mornings in contemplative prayer for the Peace Center. Her most powerful experience in life was a 2007 medical trip to India through the Dalit Freedom Network. S. Andree was a compassionate, upbeat person who loved life. She had a warm and reassuring presence which she shared readily with others. She enjoyed garden-

ing, baking and watercolor painting.

S. Andree is survived by her Benedictine community; her siblings: Tom (Mary) Mechtenberg, Jeanne (Forest) Fisher, and David (Katie) Mechtenberg; her sister-in-law Mary Mechtenberg and nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents and her brother, Paul.

Memorials may be made to Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton or to the St. Thomas More Foundation in Canon City, Colorado.

To send an online message to the family, please visit [www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com](http://www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com).

Yankton Press & Dakotan  
April 4, 2015



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## Plan

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survivor benefits and judicial members' higher benefits.

Eliminating those subsidies in the current plan isn't under consideration by the trustees at this point.

"The subsidies were put in intentionally," actuary Doug Fiddler, one of the consultants, said.

Another change would be using five years of salary to determine final average compensation for calculating benefits under the new plan. The current plan uses three years.

The trustees and the consultants have worked for approximately two years discussing and analyzing data.

Trustees received their first look at the general concepts for the new plan Thursday.

"We have something

to react to," Lt. Gov. Matt Michels, a trustee, said.

The preliminary information Thursday filled 46 pages and the new design's explanation ran 14 pages.

"This is the biggest report we've ever given to the board," SDRS administrator Rob Wylie said.

"It's a giant project. We expect it to last the whole year," he continued.

Trustee James Johns, a captain in the Rapid City police department, asked the consultants to prepare a comparison of a new employee who would start on the first day of the new plan and a new employee who started on the last day before the new plan.

Trustees didn't take a formal vote but made known a consensus: They want to take the new plan to the Legislature for consideration in the 2016 session.

"Sounds like we have our marching orders," Wylie said.

## IN REMEMBRANCE

**LaVina L. "Bunny" Prue**  
1:00 PM, Saturday  
Community Center  
Santee

**Virginia Donahoe**  
10:30 AM, Monday  
Sister James Care Center  
Gathering Place  
Yankton

**Harold "Les" Korff**  
10:30 AM, Monday  
Holy Trinity Catholic Church  
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