

# Benefit To Aid Niobrara Resort Owner Coping With Flood Damage – And Cancer

BY LINDA WUEBBEN  
P&D Correspondent

NIOBRARA, Neb. — Ron Fettig fulfilled a life-long dream 13 years ago when he and Bill Salmen purchased the Blue Moon Resort near Lazy River Acres near Niobrara from Joe Peschl.

"I had decided by the age of 40, I wanted to have a little place like this," said Fettig. He was 41 years old by then but still waiting to fulfill his dream.

Last year's Missouri River flooding has taken a toll on Fettig's dream.

And the year ended with Fettig facing an even greater battle: lung cancer.

The Blue Moon Resort will host a benefit on Saturday, Feb. 25, to raise funds for Fettig to help defray medical expenses.

Clearly, 2011 was a long year for Fettig. The trouble first set in when, with only a day and a half notice, Fettig was forced to move everything he owned out of his home and resort before the Missouri River covered it with water.

"I have a lot of friends," Fettig said with a laugh. "It's always good to have a lot of friends." He needed those friends who showed up from Plainview, Norfolk, Omaha, and many towns in between, when the flood waters starting knocking at his back door. They backed a semi up to the front door of the resort and walked everything that wasn't bolted to the floor up the ramp. They unloaded his stuff in storage sheds and buildings found all over Knox County.

"Every day I checked my home and the resort in a boat," Fettig said. He even taxied other residents of the Lazy River Acres community by boats to check how their residences were standing up. The water level came up to 32 inches on the doors in the resort.

After the water releases were reduced in the dam system above and below, it took about two to three weeks before Fettig and

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RON FETTIG

Salmen could get into the resort building to assess the damage and begin rebuilding. The waters had receded from the building but there was still water covering the road when they started working on Aug. 24.

The smell was horrible and the men had to completely gut the inside down to the studs. The mold needed to be treated, and generators were brought in to run fans to dry it out. A local bank told the partners to do what they had to do to so they could open the doors again. They realized the service the Blue Moon provided for the 250 residences located along the river banks.

On Nov. 18, the Blue Moon Resort hosted a party. They were open for business and ready to celebrate with a brand-spanking new horseshoe bar and shuffleboard table. The owners decided it was a great opportunity to make some changes they had thought about and some they hadn't. It would be a good way to attract new business. Everyone would want to see the changes.

But during the renovation of the local business, Fettig started hacking and coughing. The first diagnosis was walking pneumonia. After all, there was the mold in the building and the smell was atrocious. But his hacking got worse. He found himself in Yankton where the doctors gave him more bad news. On Dec. 2, he was diagnosed with lung cancer.

"I was so ready to kick 2011 out the door,"

Fettig said.

He has completed his third set of treatments and is halfway through the schedule but is doing well. He laughed when admitting he has lost his hair but otherwise, he is having good luck with the treatments.

When the other shoe fell, and everyone realized Fettig had cancer, his friends decided they weren't finished helping him.

"We have been friends with Ron ever since he worked for Peterson's Ag in Osmond and helped set up our center pivot," Ruth Walton of Creighton said. "He had so much happen this last year and he just keeps on cooking in that resort. We just needed to help." Walton has been involved in several fundraisers over the years and she is pleased how quickly this benefit is coming together.

The group sponsoring the benefit has not even advertised the event in the papers but phone calls continue to come in with items for the silent and regular auction. The items run the gamut from a hunting knife to a four-man hunt to bales of alfalfa hay to yard art and a crocheted afghan. The generosity has been amazing.

But bidders will be needed when the Blue Moon Resort hosts the Feb. 25 benefit to help Fettig with all the expenses and medical bills he now has to deal with. There will be food, which has all been donated, silent auction items, regular auction items and music.

"People know about all our hardships; what we've lost," Fettig said. "With their help, we will make the Blue Moon bigger and better. I couldn't get through this without them."

Fettig and his wife Julie had just moved into a new cabin built by Fettig's own hands before the flooding. They burned it to the ground after the floodwaters receded and he plans on building again on the same spot.

"There is a lot of ugliness still, but it will go away," Fettig said. "Everyone is coming back and I am always thinking positive. I have too much to live for and I'm not giving up."

## Outside-Of-Deadwood Grant Program Awards Available

DEADWOOD — Since 2002, the Deadwood Historic Preservation Commission has provided more than \$2 million in assistance to help promote the preservation and interpretation of historic sites, buildings, and properties, throughout the state with the Outside-of-Deadwood Grant program. The program, which awards up to \$250,000 each year, stimulates quality rehabilitation, protection and interpretation of buildings, sites and properties that contribute to an understanding of Deadwood's unique history.

In the past Outside-of-Deadwood Grants have been awarded to numerous South Dakota communities, including Buffalo Gap, Sisseton, Dell Rapids, Hot Springs, Lead, Pierre, Rapid City, Spearfish, Mitchell, Yankton and Sioux Falls.

Grants are awarded over the course of two funding rounds each year in January and June. National Historic Landmarks or

National Register properties owned and operated by a not-for-profit or governmental entity are welcome to apply. Other projects with a relationship to Deadwood's history organized by not-for-profits are also encouraged to apply. Funds will typically not exceed \$25,000.

Kevin Kuchenbecker, Deadwood Historic Preservation Officer stated, "The January 2012 funding round was extremely competitive with 16 grant applications received requesting \$313,906.53. The Grants Committee spent a great deal of time going over the applications and came up with recommendations they felt were fair and equitable. Some applicants which were not funded this round will be considered in the second round, as well as any new applications."

The Deadwood Historic Preservation Commission has announced the following projects were awarded during this funding cycle:

- The Feigel Foundation (His-

toric Rapid City) for foundation and structural repairs to the sandstone wall of the McGillycuddy House in the amount of \$10,000.

- The Emmanuel Episcopal Church for roof replacement in the amount of \$20,000.

- The Old Fort Meade Museum for interior exhibits in the amount of \$12,500.

- The Saint Francis of Assisi Catholic Church for the Saint Martin's Chapel in the amount of \$20,000.

- The Hermosa Arts and History Association for period appropriate doors and railings in the amount of \$4,000.

- The Black Hills Historic Preservation Trust, Inc. for interpretive signage at the Gold Mountain Mine in the amount of \$4,000.

- The City of Mobridge for architectural plans for ADA compliant bathrooms in the amount of \$1,000.

- The Newell Museum for exterior preservation of the museum in the amount of \$15,000.

- The Black Hills Mining Mu-

seum for professional archival development in the amount of \$7,000.

- The First Presbyterian Church in Lead for an egress and fire escape in the amount of \$5,000.

- The Tri-State Museum for a temperature controlled archival storage facility in the amount of \$10,000.

- The Fassbender Photographic Collection, Inc. for professional development and organization of the Fassbender Photographic Collection in the amount of \$11,500.

- Philip Horizons for the creation of an interpretive site honoring "Scotty Philip" in the amount of \$5,000.

Kuchenbecker stated, "This makes the total amount of the first round \$125,000.00 for many outstanding historic preservation projects across the state."

In order to be considered for the second round of funding, applications must be delivered to the Deadwood Historic Preservation Office located at 108 Sherman Street, Deadwood, SD 57732 on or before 4 p.m. (MT) June 2. Questions should be directed to Kevin Kuchenbecker, Historic Preservation Officer, (605) 578-2082 or kevin@cityofdeadwood.com.

### Webster Elementary Wins 'Recycle-Bowl'

Yankton's Webster Elementary School has won the statewide "Recycle-Bowl" recycling contest, it was announced Wednesday.

Keep America Beautiful, Inc., the nation's largest volunteer-based community action and education organization, of which Keep Yankton Beautiful is an affiliate, made the announcement for the contest, described as "the first comprehensive nationwide recycling competition for elementary-, middle- and high-school students."

Webster students recycled 67 pounds of waste, earning \$1000 in prize money for the school.

"Keep America Beautiful is thrilled with the success of Recycle-Bowl's inaugural year and our congratulations go out not just to Webster Elementary but to all participating schools for their work in showing how small changes can make a huge impact," said Matt McKenna, president and CEO of Keep America Beautiful. "Teachers and recycling coordinators report that the competition provided them with a mechanism to start or improve their school's recycling operations. Importantly, they tell us it also provided them with invaluable teaching moments about sustainability, math, science and social studies."

From Oct. 17 through Nov. 12, 2011, participating schools recycled as much as possible. The total amount of school only recyclables recovered during the 2011 competition added up to 2,088,000 pounds, which in turn prevented the release of nearly 990 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO2E). In real-world terms, this reduction in greenhouse gases is equivalent to the annual emissions from 154 passenger cars; 191,998 gallons of gas; or nearly 7.4 million gallons of water.

The Boys & Girls Club of Yankton's "Academy" program implemented recycle-bowl on all five elementary campuses utilizing recycle stations provided by Keep Yankton Beautiful.

A full list of statewide winners can be found at www.Recycle-Bowl.org .

### Great Backyard Bird Count Slated Feb 17-20

Warmer temperatures and lack of snow in parts of North America are setting the stage for what could be a most intriguing 15th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, coming up Feb. 17-20.

Bird watchers across the U.S. and Canada are getting ready to tally millions of birds in the annual count coordinated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Audubon, and Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada.

In past counts, participants were most likely to report American Robins in areas without snow. Will more robins be seen farther north this year? Will some birds, such as Eastern Phoebe, begin their migrations earlier? And where will the "Harry Potter" owl turn up next? Snowy Owls have dazzled spectators as these Arctic birds have ventured south in unusual numbers this winter — an unpredictable occurrence that experts believe is related more to the availability of food than to weather.

Participants count birds at any location they wish for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count, then enter their tallies at www.birdcount.org . Anyone can participate in the free event, and no registration is required.

Last year, participants submitted more than 92,000 checklists with more than 11 million bird observations. These data capture a picture of how bird populations are changing across the continent year after year — a feat that would be impossible without the help of tens of thousands of participants.

To learn more about how to join the count, get bird ID tips, downloadable instructions, a how-to video, past results, and more visit www.birdcount.org . The count also includes a photo contest and a prize drawing for participants who enter at least one bird checklist online.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is made possible in part by sponsor Wild Birds Unlimited <http://www.wbu.com/>.

### Bariatric Seminar For Weight Loss Scheduled

The public is invited to attend a free educational presentation on Bariatric Surgery for Weight Loss using the adjustable LAP-BAND® System at 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 20, at the Best Western Kelly Inn, 1607 East Hwy 50, Yankton.

General Surgeon Michael D. Haley, MD, FACS, on staff at Avera Queen of Peace Hospital in Mitchell, is a trained bariatric surgeon and uses the BioEnterics® LAP-BAND® System, and will be the featured speaker at the Bariatric Seminar.

Individuals 80 to 100 pounds overweight that have been unable to keep pounds off with over-the-counter medication, exercise, or other weight loss programs now have a minimally invasive surgery option that significantly reduces the capacity for food intake. The LAP BAND® System is adjustable and is placed laparoscopically without cutting or stapling of the stomach or gastrointestinal rerouting to bypass normal digestion.

In addition to Dr. Haley, staff at Avera Medical Group Bariatrics includes Nathan Hinker, CNP; Mindy Miller, RN, Bariatric Coordinator; and Deb Schoenfelder, RN.

For more information about bariatric surgery using the LAP-BAND® System, attend the presentation or call Avera Medical Group Bariatrics at 996-5482.

### OBITUARIES

#### Roland Whetsel

Roland Charles Whetsel, 84, passed from this life on January 14, 2012 at Parker CO.

He was born at Waubay, SD to Donald and Doris Whetsel, married Daun Rodee, his high school sweetheart from Garden City High School in 1952, and was the father of five children. He served in the 82nd Airborne and had a career of 35 years with Northwestern Bell, retiring in 1987. He was preceded in death by his infant son, Dirk, and his parents.

He is survived by his wife, Daun, and his son, Raleigh of Parker, CO, Heidi Dorsey of Mitchell, SD, Gretel Baird of Belvidere, IL, Cameron Whetsel of Charlottesville, Va, nine grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren. He is survived by his seven siblings, Ivan Whetsel of Rice Lake, WI, Kathryn Wolverton of



Whetsel

Las Vegas, NV, Barbara Herther of Alpine, CA, Donald Whetsel of Wheat Ridge CO, Carl Whetsel of Watertown, SD, Argil Hunter of Garretson, SD, and Virgil Whetsel of Rapid City, SD.

A memorial service will be held at the Community Center at Artesian, SD on April 28th at 1:00 p.m.

Yankton Press & Dakotan  
February 16, 2012

#### Norbert Bogner

CROFTON, Neb. — Norbert B. Bogner, 97, of Crofton, Neb., died Tuesday, February 14, 2012, at his son Dick Bogner's residence in Spring, Texas.

Mass of Christian Burial is at 10:30 a.m. Saturday at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church, Crofton, with the Rev. Michael Schmitz officiating. Burial will be at the St. Rose of Lima Cemetery in Crofton.

Visitation is Saturday at church from 9 a.m. until service time.

Arrangements are under the direction of the Wintz Funeral Home, Crofton.

#### Sharon Freng

Sharon Freng, 73, of Yankton died Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2012, at Avera McKennan Hospital, Sioux Falls.

Funeral services are pending with Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory, Yankton.

#### Marvin Cleland

BENNINGTON, Neb. — Marvin H. Cleland, 94, of Bennington, Neb., formerly of Vermillion, died Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2012, at Immanuel Hospital, Omaha, Neb.

Funeral services are at 10 a.m. Saturday at First United Methodist Church, Vermillion, with visitation one hour prior to the service on Saturday. Burial will be in Bluff View Cemetery.

Kober Funeral Home, Vermillion, is in charge of arrangements.

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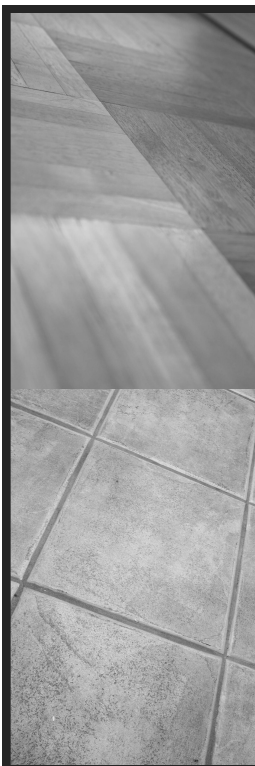
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