

# DICKEY COUNTY LEADER

## The Official Newspaper of Dickey County

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## A big thinker and doer in a small town: Brent Olson of Bigstone Minnesota to speak at the Opera House, Tuesday May 6

*"As farms consolidate, factories close and young people leave the communities they grew up in never to return, rural America has been forced to imagine a new future for itself. Rural county commissioner Brent Olson invites his audience to "Think Again!" about the future of rural America as he describes his vision to turn one of the smallest, poorest counties in the state into a vibrant haven for creative minds,"*  
--introduction to a 2019 TED Talk by Brent Olson.

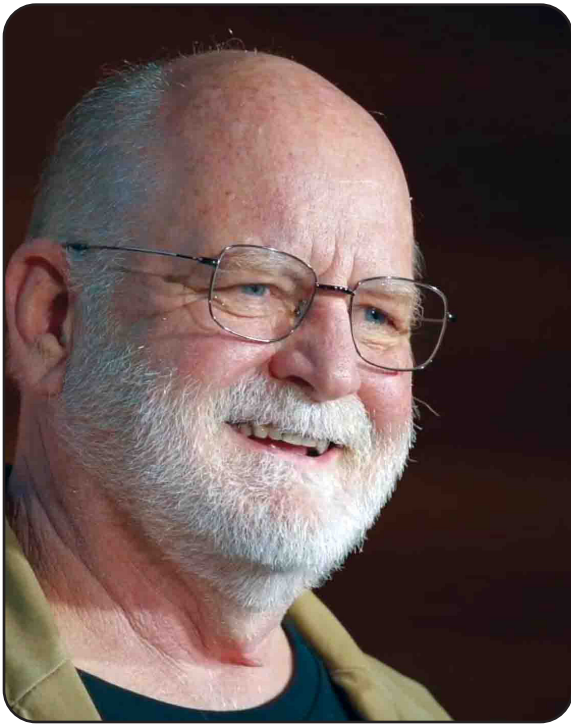
On May 6, the Ellendale Area Arts Council will be hosting a free talk by one of our region's most eloquent and experienced participants in community revitalization.

Brent Olson, a prolific writer whose books and columns have thousands of readers, combines strong support of the arts with decades of experience getting his hands dirty (often literally) to improve the small town and surrounding area that he calls home.

Brent made a living as a farmer for 30 years. He served over 15 years as a county commissioner, and along the way was recognized for his work in economic development and also in soil and water conservation and more.

Public service is practically Brent's middle name. He has served on the Southwest Minnesota Arts and Humanities Council, Big Stone County Pork Producers, the United Methodist Board of Ordained Ministries, and the board of the New Life Primary School in Mizac, Haiti. He was a 2012 Bush Foundation Fellow, an experience that led to his published book called *The Inadvertent Café*. Brent has written well over a thousand columns, filed stories from six continents, and published at least six books.

The Arts Council will hold its annual meeting at 6:00 on May 6 at the Opera House, and the free public presentation will be at 7:00. The public is cordially invited



"Make your community a place where creative people want to live. They'll figure out a way to make a living, and in the process they'll create jobs for other people." Olson says there are "three T's" needed for community success: *"technology, talent, and tolerance."* Much of his life has been devoted to communicating the importance of each.

to both meetings. Hosting this special guest is in keeping with the Council's mission to serve *all the people of our area* not only by promoting the arts, but by supporting the mutual success and prosperity of everyone who lives here now and will make it their home in years to come.

## Missoula Children's Theater to conduct Rumpelstiltskin-- Auditions are May 5, performances May 9 & 10

**Submitted--**An audition will be held for the Missoula Children's Theatre (MCT) production of RUMPELSTILTSKIN on Monday, May 5 from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm. All those auditioning should arrive at 3:25 pm and plan to stay for the full two hours. Some of the cast members will be asked to stay for a rehearsal immediately following the audition.

Among the roles to be cast are Rumpelstiltskin, Queen Beatrice, Clara, a Jester, King Whatsat, Villagers, Gnomes, Wizards, Knights and Bees. Students in grades kindergarten through 12th grade, are encouraged to audition. No preparation is necessary. Assistant Directors will also be cast to aid in rehearsals throughout the week and to take on essential backstage responsibilities.

The Missoula Children's Theatre touring productions are complete with costumes, scenery, and props. The MCT Tour Actor/Directors will conduct rehearsals throughout the week from 3:30 to 8:30 pm each day.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN will be presented on May 9 (7 pm) and May 10 (2 pm) at Ellendale Public School. The week is part of the Missoula Children's Theatre's



MISSOULA  
CHILDREN'S  
THEATRE

Adapted by  
Don Kukla

Music and Lyrics by  
Michael McGill  
and Don Kukla

unique international touring project and is presented locally by Ellendale Public School, with sponsorship by Ellendale Public School Foundation and Meidinger Construction.

For more information, call Mrs. Radermacher at the school – 701-349-3232.

## Remembering a pair who made a difference: Bob & Gwen Tatum

**Editor's note:** This Saturday at 11:00 am, family and friends will gather at the Ellendale Church of the Nazarene to celebrate lives that touched them deeply. Bob Tatum (88) passed away in December 2024. His wife Gwen (86) died the following month. Both were extraordinary people, and the family determined that their legacy would best be honored by holding a gathering early in the spring, when many college alumni would be able to attend.

To the Ellendale community, Bob and Gwen were best known as the friendly proprietors of the Oxenrider Motel and devoted members of their congregation. To students and staff at Trinity Bible College, Bob was the legendary athletic director, teacher and founding coach of the Crusaders football team (later renamed the Lions). Bob's mission as a coach was to build solid Christian men and women through a carefully thought out, Christ-centered athletic philosophy.

Gwen spent half her years in Ellendale, and filled numerous valuable roles here. She worked at the Registrar's Office at Trinity Bible College, served as the Activities Director at the Ellendale Nursing Home, and was Director of Tax Equalization for Dickey County. In later years, she worked at the Ellendale Public Library and up to her death continued to write a little newspaper column called "The Bookworm," which was much appreciated.

In the fall of 2019, a few months before the COVID pandemic stunned the world, Trinity's

board decided to discontinue the school's football program, which had for years struggled to remain viable. As a friend and former student of Bob's (he was my P. E. teacher in 1982 and I had visited with him and Gwen occasionally since I returned to Ellendale in 2001), I decided it would be a good time to interview him and do a story on the Trinity football team. We published that story in our November 14, 2019 edition. This week, in honor of our departed friends, we publish it again, with minor revisions.

**Bob Tatum looks back at TBC football program and motel work, by Ken Smith (originally published in the Dickey County Leader, November 14, 2019)**

"When I came to Trinity," Bob Tatum said of his call to North Dakota, "it was strictly of the Lord. I had coached football for many years," he added, "but I left a football program behind" when saying goodbye to southern California. When he took up his duties as TBC athletic director, P.E. teacher, and head basketball coach in 1983, the college didn't have football. Starting a team was not on Bob's agenda. "I didn't ask anything about it," he recalled. "I thought the Lord was taking me out of football, because it had been my God." Shortly after hearing the news of the program's retirement, Tatum sat down for an interview with the *Leader*.

"Coach Tatum," as he is still known to the many students and athletes he inspired during his seven years at Trinity (1983-1990), understands nearly every aspect of his life in terms of his Christian faith and Divine Providence. He cannot be understood without reference to this grounding. Bob's invitation to Ellendale came just at the time Lowell Lundstrom, a South Dakota native and well

known Midwestern evangelist had been selected as TBC's president. The college's administration was impressed with Bob's experience and his coaching philosophy, which he described as "total release." The central concept was that Christian athletes (and all believers) ought to "release" their efforts at all times to becoming more like Christ, holding nothing back.

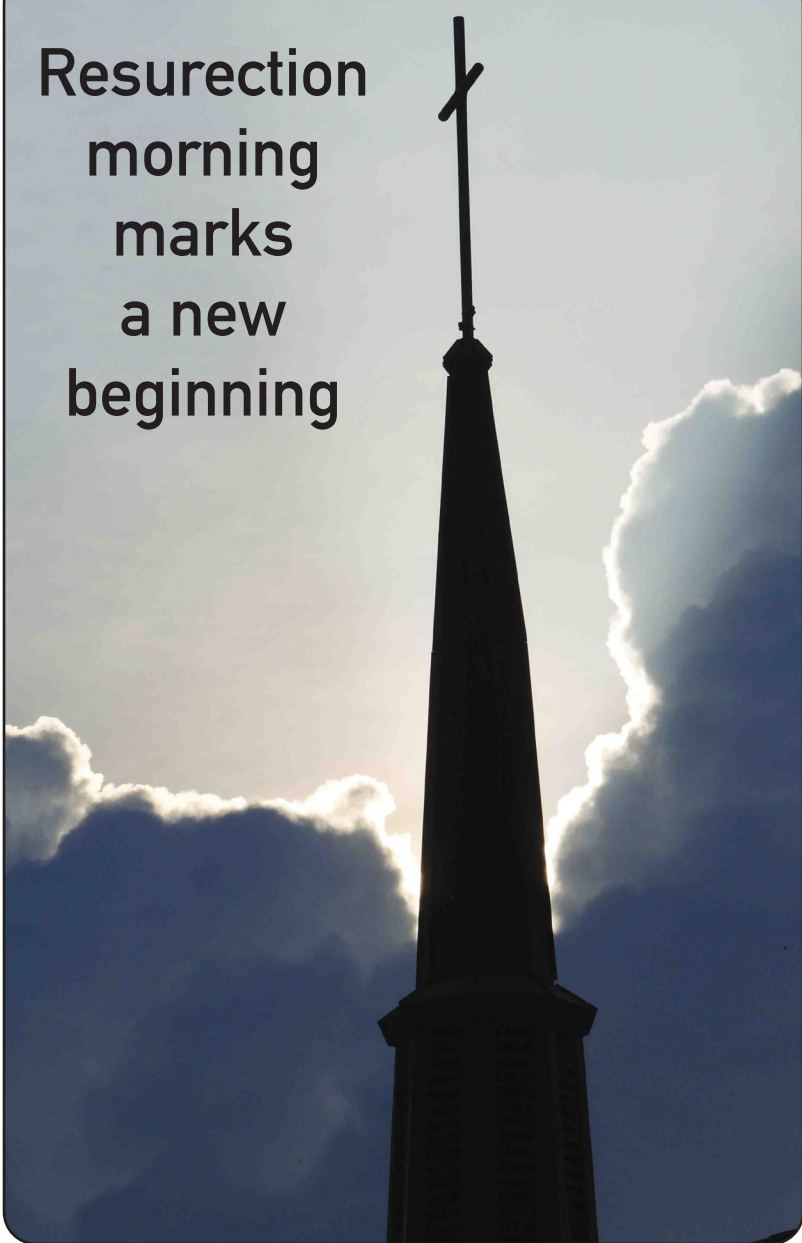
As Bob describes it, "total release" sounds very similar to the "audience of one" concept invoked by NDSU football legend Carson Wentz, who went on as the quarterback of the Philadelphia Eagles. The emphasis is more on character than on "success" measured in numbers. It's not that winning wasn't important. But with Bob's "total release" concept, sports and athleticism was understood not as an end in itself but as way to express one's spiritual commitment. Because of this philosophy, Bob had been willing to relinquish his lifetime dedication to the sport he had loved the most. In his own words, he had come to "realize how much better God was than football."

But after a year performing his many teaching and athletic duties at TBC, a student approached him about the game. "Why," the student asked, "doesn't Trinity have a football program?" Bob was not in favor of starting a program, but neither was he opposed. "Don't you think it would be a good idea?" the student persisted. "I really believe" he insisted, "that God has led me here to start a football team." But Bob was non-committal. "I'll pray for you and the idea, but I want to be neutral in this. I didn't tell him all the reasons I thought I needed to be neutral until later."

Bob advised the student first to pray and seek guidance about whether a football team would really be a good idea. If it seemed right, he told the young man, he should approach college administrators about the matter. He did.

*(continued on page 3)*

## Resurrection morning marks a new beginning



Whether they worship in buildings with spires that reach to the sky, as illustrated by the photo of the steeple at St. Helena's church, or in churches whose roofs lay below the tree line, as in the photo of Christ the King Lutheran church, Christian believers are united in faith in Christ's resurrection and its power to transform life both now and in the future.  
*(photos by Ken Smith)*

### Quotes from Pope Francis

*"Hope is the ability to see that there is light despite all of the darkness."*

*"Love is not just a feeling; it is a choice, a commitment, an attitude that grows through daily acts of kindness."*

### School board election coming up on June 3, 2025

*see sample ballot on page 3*



In the top photo (from a mid 1980s TBC yearbook), Bob huddles in prayer with TBC players before they head out on the field. Below, Tim Brown, former pastor of the Ellendale Church of the Nazarene, enjoys moments with Bob, Becky and Gwen Tatum in September 2022. The Tatums came to Ellendale in 1983, when Bob became athletic director at TBC. Tim came in 1985, and served as pastor until 2015 *(photo by Ken Smith)*

Recycling Pick Up			Recycling Dumpster Pick up				
Garbage Pick Up			Garbage Dumpster Pick Up				
April							
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
B			1	2	3	4	5
A	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
B	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
A	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
B	27	28	29	30		1	