

SPEAKING OF THE HOUSE

In the midst of a re-election campaign, a beef carcass fell on **Rep. Peter Nelson (R-Lindstrom)** while he working at his Lindstrom butcher shop Sept. 21. The blow forced his right hand, which held a butcher knife, into his left arm, severely slicing an artery. He was rushed by helicopter to Region's Hospital in St. Paul where he spent three days in the trauma center and received seven pints of blood.

Speaking Jan. 4 on the House floor, Nelson gave thanks for the hundreds of cards, flowers and prayers from his colleagues on both sides of the aisle and from staff. "Your support for me as an individual crossed party lines," he said. "Your support shows we really do matter to each other as individuals. I hope that same degree of respect will continue as we proceed to do the people's business."

Nelson's wife, Debra, said her husband has already used up several of his nine lives, including the defeat of a stage-four cancer in his neck.

The first meeting of the House Capital Investment Committee Jan. 11 started about six minutes late.

When members took turns introducing themselves, first-term **Rep. Neil W. Peterson**

(R-Bloomington) said, "Obviously I'm a new kid because I showed up 15 minutes early." Laughter then filled the room.

Despite best efforts by all, House meetings and floor sessions oftentimes start past their scheduled time.

A moment of silence was held in the House chamber Jan. 12 for former four-term **Rep. John Burger (R-Long Lake)** who passed away earlier that day at age 88.

"He was residing with family in California at the time of his death," said Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound), who replaced Burger in the House.

"I feel eight years is an adequate time for people to make whatever impact they can in the House," Burger said upon his retirement in 1990 after four terms. "But I'm not yet satisfied with what I've been able to do... I have a number of ideas I want to continue to press and I thought finding another platform to speak from [as governor] would be the way to go."

Burger ultimately ran for state treasurer, but was defeated by Michael McGrath.

As members of the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee introduced themselves Jan. 11, **Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls)** told of her personal interest in the committee.

Not only did her father serve as a doctor in World War II, but, she said, "I worked on the design of the M-16 rifle as a student intern in the summer at the Frankfurt Arsenal in Philadelphia, and every time one of those misfired in Vietnam I cringed and worried if it was some sort of miscalculation that I had done." Kahn has degrees in both physics and biophysics.

Rep. Jerry Dempsey (R-Red Wing) also mentioned that he was in the infantry, and recalled a first week conversation with a first sergeant about how he often had just five minutes to eat because of long "chow lines."

"I'm standing in line and standing in line and I said, 'Haven't you got a better system than that?'" The first sergeant responded, "Private, you don't like to stand in the line?" Dempsey said he did not, to which the sergeant responded, "Well stand in a circle."

"I got the information real quick as to not question what I was told to do," he said with a laugh.

State of the State update

Gov. Tim Pawlenty will go on the road this year to deliver his annual State of the State address.

Traditionally delivered at the State Capitol, plans call for the speech highlighting the governor's legislative vision to be given

at 11 a.m. Jan. 18 at the Mayo Clinic Superior Drive Support Center in Rochester.

Medical tests and blood and tissue testing are performed at the center, which is set to expand this year with the help of tax breaks under the state's Job Opportunity

Building Zones program.

"By taking the State of the State out of the Capitol, I hope to encourage all Minnesotans to take a greater interest in the work that will be done in St. Paul over the coming months," Pawlenty said.