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The Holiday Issue

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Happy Holidays



Volume 14, Number 6

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Inspired Woman is published six times a year by Berget Publishing. Mailed copies available by subscription for \$18 per six issues. Send check to: Berget Publishing, 311 S. 8th Street, Bismarck, ND 58504.

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Our Mission

The mission of Inspired Woman is to use our community presence to celebrate, encourage, empower, educate and entertain women.

Printed by



The Printers, Inc.

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INSPIRED WOMAN

DECEMBER 2015 / JANUARY 2016

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~ Be Inspired ~



I've always loved this time of year, minus the snow and the cold. My favorite childhood memory is going with my parents and siblings to the Slim Buttes to cut down our tree. We paid a dollar for a permit to cut any tree we wanted. We collected pinecones and extra pine tree branches for decorating. We always had at least one snowball fight, and if we were good (as in we didn't hit mom or dad with a snowball) we would stop for a treat on the way home.

My kids have grown up with an artificial tree, but we've created some other fun traditions, like decorating our artificial tree together, watching cheesy Christmas movies, and shopping for gifts for each other. We've cut back big time on what we buy for our kids, but it's still fun to search for a few things to make them smile. I've discovered it truly is better to give than to receive.

I feel the same way about this issue. It is full of so many great things and I wish I could see all of your faces as you discover everything we've put together for you. There are stories to inspire you to help others – check out cover girl, Sister Kathleen Atkinson, and her ministry and read how students at Bismarck High School are helping their fellow classmates. And we've got ideas to help you get into the holiday spirit, from holiday cocktails to Christmas cards, and even some non-traditional gift ideas. I've only scratched the surface – there are so many great articles in this issue!

But the best part of this issue for me has been spending so much time with an old friend and my new co-editor, Marci Narum. Marci and I have been friends for almost 20 years; we met when we were both working at KFYR-TV. Working with her again has taken me back to those days and it has been a blast. I hope you enjoy reading this issue as we had putting it together.

Merry Christmas!

Jody



Andy Williams and others sing about this as "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year." For me, that has never been truer, because I have joined Jody as co-editor of Inspired Woman. The theme for this holiday issue is all about gifts and memories. What a wonderful gift for me—to be working with my friend again. And we are already having fun making memories as we plan and share creative ideas for this magazine.

I crave opportunities for learning, and this is already proving to be a terrific way to learn more about the people who make our community as great as it is. It is my treat to feature Sister Kathleen Atkinson in this issue! I hope you enjoy learning more about what inspired her journey, and led her to become the influence she is today.

My thanks to Abby Bardell, Communications Coordinator at Missouri Slope Lutheran Care Center for suggesting that we include the voices and inspiration of women in their golden years. Jody and I plan to make Living Treasures part of every issue. The goal is to capture the words and wisdom of ladies whose stories and experiences are part of our local and state history. In this issue, six ladies share their Christmas memories from times when life was simpler, but more difficult. I was moved as I heard the love and gratitude of these women who reflected on their lives as little girls and young adults. You will find their stories on page 10.

As you recall your favorite holiday memories and make more this year, I send you my warmest wishes for a Merry Christmas, and many blessings in 2016.

Marci



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Sister Kathleen Atkinson

Everyone's Sister

By Marci Narum

Freedom is a beautiful thing. For most people, anyway. For some, after years of incarceration, it can be frightening.

Sister Kathleen Atkinson has made this observation over years of working in prison ministry at the North Dakota State Penitentiary. It also led her to start conversations about how to help people facing a return to freedom after its loss and experiencing this fear. Those conversations have resulted in Ministry on the Margins. The volunteer-based, ecumenical ministry supports individuals and families during times of transition, especially those re-entering society from prison.

Ministry on the Margins opened two years ago, in October 2013. But Sister Kathleen said she never set out to serve people in the way the ministry has unfolded—with a food pantry, family support group, coffee, weekly warm meals, and much more.

"It has been such a grass-roots effort. I am learning from the people we serve. The two phrases that have become so important to me are, 'Thank you' and 'I didn't know,'" Sister Kathleen said. "Thank you to my parents for being stable people who loved me. Thank you for the many little things that make life a blessing. Thank you that I got to grow up in Bismarck, a city I love."

She continued, explaining what she didn't know.

"I just didn't know some of the ways that people were struggling. I mean I knew, but I didn't know what it was really about. I didn't know that a person that gets six months in prison has a mom. Many have children. I say I didn't know because I just didn't think of it," Sister Kathleen explained.

The day we visited, Sister Kathleen said she had received a phone call regarding a woman whose two daughters were sentenced on drug charges.



Kathleen with arms full of blankets



Kathleen at the prison gates in 2013

1968 Atkinson family photo

"How often do you see two siblings busted for drugs? They are both in prison. And now a grandma has six children she's raising, while their mothers are gone. She is on a fixed income. There is no assistance. It's not like she automatically gets assistance payments or child support or anything. I never read the newspaper and thought about that."

Sister Kathleen said the ministry has opened her eyes to the many stark realities a family faces when a loved one is incarcerated. It has also made her more aware of the very simple needs that become frighteningly real for those re-entering society after serving time.

"I was out at the prison yesterday. A man came up to me. I had known him as a second grader, in First Holy Communion class. He is getting out in ten days. He's 50 years old; he was arrested at age 22. He is scared to death. He asked me, 'Bismarck has changed, huh?' I said, yes it's changed."

A lot of change can happen in 28 years in a city such as Bismarck, and in a person's life. Sister Kathleen explained that the man's parents have died. She doesn't know what type of support system he will have.

"Think of the skills you've developed that are part of adulthood. For someone who has been institutionalized most of their young adulthood and then expected to successfully be a 50 year old in society, you're almost like a refugee...suddenly dropped into a totally foreign world."

Sister Kathleen continued, "He told me, 'You know one of the things I'm scared about? I have never used a cell phone. Every little kid knows how to use a cell phone.' I told him, we will teach you. You will do just fine."

This is the essence of Ministry on the Margins. It began with conversations around a coffee pot. Simply listening and responding to basic human needs.

"I call it 'The Matthew 25'—I was hungry; you fed me. That's all. It's very action-oriented. So that's how we started to say it. What if we just started to respond to real needs? And we'll deal with the structure afterward," said Sister Kathleen.

And it is working. The ministry has grown quickly, thanks to community response. Sister Kathleen said those real needs and stark realities continue to unfold. And as she becomes more aware of them, Ministry on the Margins responds.

This sense of response to community need was instilled in Sister Kathleen at an early age. She is the second oldest of seven children. Growing up, she said her family did many things together. Theirs was never a sports, music, or academic family. She referred to it as a "groupie" family.

"Now that I look back at it, we did groups and we did projects and Mom and Dad and all seven of us were doing that," she said.

Sister Kathleen and her siblings were all in Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and 4-H, but the family also made time to help



Ministry on the Margins continues to meet a growing need through the services it provides:

	<u>July 2014</u>	<u>July 2015</u>
FOOD PANTRY	38 households	74 households
PRISON RE-ENTRY	4 people	22 people
Prison2Society/Mentors		
Transitional Support		
Stay Out of Jail Supper Club		
TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY MORNING COFFEE	6 people	50 people
PRISON MINISTRY	12 men	32 men
Letter Writing and Prayer		
Benedictine Oblate Program		
Jail & Prison Chaplaincy volunteers		
3 bible studies weekly		

To learn more about Ministry on the Margins and how you can help, contact Sister Kathleen at 701-426-8747 or kathleen@annunciationmonastery.org

other people. Sister Kathleen's father, Myron Atkinson was a land developer. One of his land holdings, Tatley Meadows, was originally a large potato field.

"It was Grandma Tatley's Potato Farm. After the harvest, we would go down as a family and go through the potatoes that were left, and fill up the station wagon."

They knew other big families who could use a couple hundred pounds of potatoes, so the Atkinson family would make deliveries to them.

"It was never called 'community service.' It was just what we did on a Sunday afternoon. It was just a way of life."

"We were very creative and in fact the neighborhood was very creative. We grew up by Cathedral of the Holy Spirit on Avenue B and 1st Street. We still refer to ourselves as the Avenue B Gang."

Sister Kathleen laughed as she shared fond memories of the "Gang," composed of about 50 neighborhood grade-school kids. Their creativity included neighborhood circuses, (for which they would sell tickets to the neighbors), and their own Miss Neighborhood Pageant. Sister Kathleen says one year the Avenue B Gang even collected Christmas trees that had been tossed out onto the curb after the holiday.

"We gathered 80 Christmas trees and built a log cabin in our backyard."

Sister Kathleen's life work is focused on the people in her own backyard—the Bismarck community she loves. Faith was always central in the Atkinson family, but not imposed.

"We weren't a strict Catholic family. We were an active Catholic family."

So her first calling wasn't the ministry. It was public service. The kind that took her to Washington, D.C.

In 1975, Sister Kathleen served as an intern for the state's U.S. Senator Milt Young. She was there for five months, and she loved everything about the experience—the city, the lifestyle, and being with people of influence and change.

"But while I was out there, I was a student at Mary at the time. I found that while I was in D.C. I was enjoying the city, but yearning for the sunsets. And picturing being back home and being back at the hills south of town."

She also discovered something else about herself: "I want to be a change maker, but I want to do it with that spiritual dimension. I want to influence laws and society. But my spiritual life is key."

Sister Kathleen moved back home to Bismarck and the University of Mary, and after graduation she began the journey at the Annunciation Monastery. It eventually became her family and her life.

Sister Kathleen has done a variety of work since then; teaching third grade and high school students and developing programs for the University of Mary.

"That's what I like to do, start new things, get them going, empower other people and hand it off. Then step back and watch what happens."

So that is what she has done again, with Ministry on the Margins. As she watches it grow, Sister Kathleen has been inspired to think about writing another book. It will be her third, and she only hinted that it will be about the ministry and the people there who teach her so much.

Including what she has learned about freedom.

"I never thought that for me prison ministry would not be so much about being in prison. It's about the lives of people when they are out."

4 LEGENDARY WAYS TO SAVOR THE SEASON IN *North Dakota*

By ND Tourism

This time of year is the perfect time to savor the traditions and reflect upon who we are and what makes us unique. Keep it simple this holiday season by shopping close to home and spending quality time with family and friends. Choose a gift made by local artisans or attend one of the many events happening across the state. Here are a few options to check out, courtesy of the North Dakota Tourism Department:

1 *It's North Dakota Authentic*

Let the Christmas shopping begin! Now is a great time to load up the family and search out that one-of-a-kind present created by neighbors at a regional arts and crafts show. Check out the Pride of Dakota shows and community craft fairs around the state. If you are still seeking that special gift with North Dakota flare, shop on-line at our North Dakota Legendary gift shop.



2 *Something To Savor*

Family and friends will be home to celebrate the season, so it is the perfect time to introduce them to some of North Dakota's wine producers and microbreweries on the Beer and Wine Trail. Many wineries and breweries incorporate North Dakota agricultural products such as wheat, honey and fruit, along with other unique local ingredients into their beverages.



3 *Shopping Traditions*

Black Friday may kick off the shopping mayhem, but there is something to be said about an afternoon with friends and family at the local stores or window shopping along Main Street in your hometown. Several communities have scheduled events to showcase what their downtowns have to offer and many are participating in Small Business Saturday on November 28. Small Business Saturday encourages people to "shop small and support local independent businesses."



4 *Cherish Family Moments*

Adults may see this as a learning experience, but it's really just plain old fun for the kids. A variety of learning-based activities catering to youngsters include zoo activities, arts, and even Santa Claus. Make sure you check Bismarck's Dakota Zoo for information on breakfast and story time with Santa.

These are just a few ideas to savor the season in North Dakota. For more information, go to NDtourism.com or phone 800-435-5663 or 701-328-2525.



By Marci Narum

This time of year always means shopping and gift-giving, but there is one gift that you can't buy and it can never be exchanged or returned. Fond memories. The holiday memories you share with family and friends are priceless gifts. Maybe it's the traditional meal your mother or grandmother made for Christmas Eve, a favorite gift, or going to Midnight Mass with your family. Whatever the memory, it's a gift that you keep and can unwrap year after year.

Six ladies, ages 88 to 102, and residents of Missouri Slope Lutheran Care Center and Valley View Heights in Bismarck, sat down together to share their Christmas memories.



Mavis Anderson, 88



Mavis Anderson was a teacher and a mother. She sings and loves history. And it's from a place in her own family history—the farm her father homesteaded in 1901—that she recalls one of her fondest Christmas memories.

"I suppose that I was five maybe and packages had come. One package came from my sister who was not at home at the time, and I knew that was my package.

"So as the women were doing the dishes and the men were milking the cows, I went to look at the Christmas tree, and that package for me was just a decorated box. It was too tempting. I raised the cover a little bit. And there was a teddy bear in there. When it was time to open the packages and that was passed to me and I looked at it, my sister said, 'You peeked!' I said, 'No I didn't.' I always used this story with my kids to tell them that crime does not pay."

Janet Smaltz, 99



Janet Smaltz is a feisty, quick-witted lady. She grew up in Illinois on a small farm and recalled “very happy Christmases” with her brother and her mother. Janet said they always had a big tree in their farm house, and went to the church in town, about four miles away. But when she moved to North Dakota as an adult to work for Easter Seals, she no longer had family around to celebrate the holiday. So in 1957, Janet started her own tradition, inviting friends to her home for a party. That was followed by singing at the hospital, prison, and neighborhood homes.



“They always came to my house first for Brunswick stew. Brunswick stew is chicken and ham, corn and potatoes, and onions. An old Williamsburg cook

recipe, except they started with a squirrel. And I didn’t do that.”

Janet played the piano or accordion for the singers, while one of her friends played a glockenspiel, or jingled sleigh bells.

“We always went about eight places. I did that for 32 years. We always claimed we didn’t sing anyplace where they could fight back. We never had a whole lot of trouble. That was what we did.

“It started with four or five of us in 1957 and the most we had was 23 people at my house for the stew. And that picture of me with the cap on, and that’s the kettle full of the stew—sometimes had two of those.”

Ida Schmidt, 88

Ida Schmidt was the youngest of nine children. She shares a heart-warming story that is not her own memory, but one her siblings shared with her about forty years ago. Ida had asked them each to share Christmas memories for a book she was putting together. Four of her siblings told the same story.

The holiday routine for the family was that after the children had gone to bed on Christmas Eve, their parents would stay up.

“Dad made the candy and filled the socks with fruit and candy and so forth. Mom finished sewing the dolls and doll clothes. That was typical.”

But that Christmas wasn’t typical.



“During The Depression there was literally no money to buy things. They remembered that Dad said at suppertime, ‘It will be a little different at Christmas this year. You won’t find any gifts when you get up in the morning as usual.’

“But as they went to bed, they heard Dad say to Mom, ‘It just isn’t right not to have a Christmas tree.’”

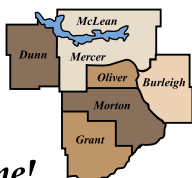
Then they heard the door slam and he went out. Nobody knew what that meant, but they went to bed.

When they woke up Christmas morning, Ida’s brother and sisters were delighted to find a Caragana tree in their house. It was decorated just like an evergreen tree from their previous, typical Christmases.

“Here was this Christmas tree with the freshly popped popcorn, strings, some candles, and the few decorations that they still had. And under the tree were three hair bows for three girls, and a springle for my brother, which is a little top.

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"I had never heard that story. It was before I was born. But my three older sisters and my older brother all put that into their memories as their most favorite Christmas event; seeing that beautiful tree when they really didn't expect a tree or any gifts."

Alice Fiedler, 90



You might expect that as you read the Christmas memories of our

golden age generation, the details would also be golden. That's not the case for Alice Fiedler. Alice grew up in Mott. She does have fond memories of her youth; especially being a member of the tumbling team, and the Rainbow Girls, an elite civic organization. She graduated from Mott High School at the top of her class in 1943, and her most cherished possession is a photo of her class. But when it comes to the holidays, Alice struggles to find fond, happy memories.

She chose her words carefully as she said, "Those were dark years. Turbulent."

Alice's childhood was spent in the dust and deprivation of the thirties. Her family was separated by the struggles of the period. She points to the class photo, shrugs, and guesses that at least half of the

families represented in that frame experienced the same reality.

Alice did share a couple of sweet memories; making fudge for her family, and homemade ice cream in the snow.

"We got some vanilla and some real cream and set it out in the snow. That was a real treat."

Polly Schmidt 102



Polly Schmidt was born and raised in Dickinson. Her daughter Lynn Christen, visiting from Williston, joined the Christmas memory conversation the day I was there. Their memories had a common theme: Santa and Midnight Mass.

"Chris Cringle brought a sack with nuts and candy and fruit and a doll," Polly said. "We went to Midnight Mass, and when we got home there was a big fat breakfast with sausage and everything with it."

"On the way to Midnight Mass, we stopped at neighbors to see if they had gone to mass," Lynn shared. "When we got home, dad would go check the coal furnace while we got our coats off. We heard something, and by then Santa had come. The gifts were on the back step. Later we found out why we stopped at the neighbor's before mass—Dad was playing Santa for them."

Lynn went on to say, "When I look back at pictures of our childhood, that tree is so little and so sparse and thin,

but when we were little it was the best looking tree. There were always gifts and we always had our picture taken by the tree, sometimes with matching nightgowns we had gotten for Christmas."

Betty Maher, 91



Betty Maher spent her life taking care of others, as a Registered Nurse. As a child, she considered herself very fortunate. She grew up during the Great Depression but said her family always had a tree. She was the youngest of four children.

"The biggest joy of my life was a surprise on Christmas when I got a bicycle. I had wanted a bicycle for so long and had given up the hope. It shocked me so with joy that I stood and cried because it was such a wonderful treat!

"Christmas was always a joyous time because everybody got home. We lived in Morristown, South Dakota. I was the youngest of the family so we would look forward to the boys coming home and they would trim the home with fringe of some kind from one end to the other.

"It was a fun time and we looked forward to them coming home on the train. We were always at the train station waiting for the train that was always late, and we stood in line for hugs and kisses. We went home and had oyster stew after the Midnight Mass and it was just a tradition that still goes on."

The Lighter Side of Holiday Cocktails

By Kylie Blanchard

The fun and merriment of the holiday season means food and drink are plentiful at parties and gatherings that fill many schedules this time of year. While this can lead to overindulgence, there are options available to enjoy holiday spirits without adding all the extra calories.

"We do have a lot of people requesting lower calorie drinks," says Julia Redig, manager at 40 Steak + Seafood. "People tend to drink a little more over the holidays, so lighter options are always a good choice."

Redig is responsible for developing the cocktail menus at 40 Steak + Seafood, which she says are created and updated seasonally. "This past year we did updates for the summer and winter menu, but this coming year we are hoping to have an updated cocktail menu for each season," she says.

With the use of a few alternative ingredients, she notes, the restaurant's winter drink menu contains delicious options that show the lighter side of holiday cocktails.

One of the first drinks Redig highlights is the menu's Hot Peach Brandy. "It is peach flavored brandy with water and a squeeze of lemon," she says, adding there is no sweetener in the drink. "A lot of people like using a flavored brandy, instead of having to put honey or sugar in their drink."

This drink takes advantage of the many flavored brandies, whiskies and vodkas that are growing in popularity, she says. "These allow people to just mix their drinks with club soda or water and a squeeze of lemon," Redig adds. "The Hot Peach Brandy is a great dessert drink for when you are a little chilly and need to warm up."

Another dessert drink on this season's cocktail menu is the Chocolate Raspberry Martini, which uses a raspberry pomegranate sorbet vodka. This is one of the many lighter vodkas used to make lower calorie martinis, which are popular year-round at both 40 Steak + Seafood and its sister restaurant, Peacock Alley. Along with the Chocolate Raspberry Martini, these popular drinks also include the Lemon Drop Martini and the Skinny Pomegranate, Skinny French, and Skinny Mango martinis. "These are always available at both restaurants," Redig says.

The final, lighter drink on the menu for the winter season is the homemade Spiced Red Sangria. "This includes the cinnamon and clove flavors popular in the winter season and goes well with a cheese and fruit platter," she notes.

Redig says using fresh squeezed juice in the Spiced Red Sangria and other drinks can also help to cut calories. "It's healthier and it tastes better," she adds.

Also becoming more popular and widely available are light beers and ciders, Redig notes, which are also a lower calorie drink option.

Below are the recipes for the featured drinks, so all can enjoy the lighter side of Holiday cocktails this season:

Hot Peach Brandy

1 oz Christian Brothers Peach Brandy
Hot water
Lemon wedge

Mix Peach Brandy and hot water
Squeeze lemon juice into drink to sweeten

Chocolate Raspberry Martini

1.5 oz Smirnoff Raspberry Pomegranate Sorbet
1.5 oz Irish Cream Liqueur
3/4 oz Chambord Liqueur
1 teaspoon Hershey's Light Chocolate Syrup

Combine all ingredients, shake and strain in to a martini glass

Spiced Red Sangria

2 bottles red wine (Cabernet or Shiraz preferred)
1 cup apple juice
2 cups strawberries
1 sliced lime
3 cinnamon sticks
2/3 cup sugar

5 oz Triple Sec
1 sliced lemon
2 sliced oranges
4 cloves

Combine all ingredients and leave overnight
Take out the cinnamon and cloves after 24 hours (otherwise the Sangria will be too spiced)
Serve over ice
Tip: Use a tea ball for the cloves for easy removal



Kylie Blanchard is a local writer.

Christmas Card Trends

By Jody Kerzman and Marci Narum

We don't get a lot of mail anymore. Online bill paying, direct deposit, and social networks have cut down drastically on the contents of our mailbox. But this time of year, I often find our mailbox stuffed to the max. And I love it – because that means it's Christmas card season! Technology has not taken away those yearly cards, letters, and pictures for many families. I have to confess: I just took down last year's cards – I just love the photos so much I can't bear to take them down!

Although getting everyone in the same place at the same time to snap a picture is getting difficult, we still send an updated family picture and a Christmas letter to our long list of friends and family each December. I'm happy to tell you, it's not just my family that does this. In fact, Marci and I found a few women who feel pretty strongly about their Christmas greetings, and like me, make sending yearly photos and letters a top priority. But their Christmas cards are NOT your grandmother's Christmas cards. These ladies are creative and their holiday greetings show it.

Christmas Newsletter - Cindy Arnold

When Cindy and Mike Arnold first got married, she wrote a family Christmas letter. Her idea was to give out-of-state family and friends a quick recap of their year. That was 23 years – and 23 Christmas letters – ago.

"It's a tradition now," she says. "Everyone kind of expects it. In fact, I talked about not writing one a few times and my aunt and my mom gave me a lot of grief. They've saved every letter over the years and didn't want to have a year missing."

Cindy's kids are grown, but she keeps writing.

"I thought maybe once the kids grew up I'd run out of stuff to write about, but that hasn't been the case," she laughs. "This year, Mike took a new job, our son won some awards in the military, and our youngest daughter is thinking about transferring to a different college, so there will be plenty to write about."

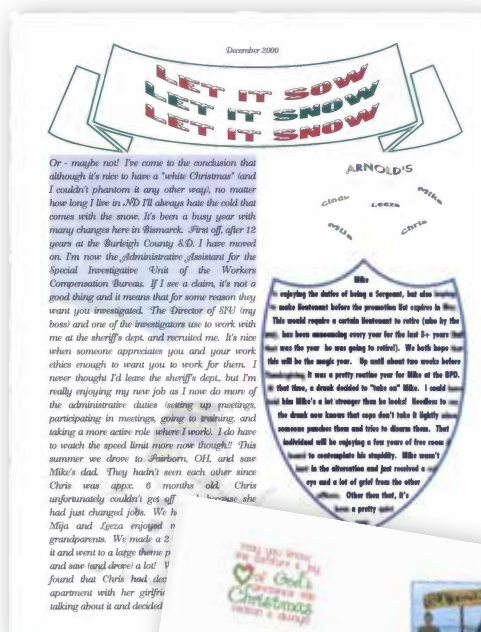
Cindy incorporates pictures into her newsletter-style Christmas letter, and writes short articles about each family member and event.

Christmas Calendar - Darcy VerDouw

Darcy VerDouw is a graphic designer and a photographer by trade, which means her Christmas cards will knock your socks off. When Darcy and her husband Brian had their first child, Madeline, seven years ago, Brian begged Darcy to write a Christmas letter. Darcy didn't want to. So, like all great married couples, they found some middle ground. Their solution? A Christmas calendar.

"I am a visual person, so for me, the idea of writing a letter about our year was really boring," admits Darcy. "So, I came up with the Christmas calendar idea."

As a photographer and a proud mom, Darcy snaps thousands of pictures every year. Come Christmas calendar time, she goes through those photos month by month. That helps her remember what happened each month. She chooses a photo for each month, writes a clever caption, and works her design magic, creating a one-of-a-kind Christmas greeting.





Picture Card - Alison Ritter

Alison Ritter always knew she wanted to send yearly Christmas cards to her friends and family, who are spread out around the country. She and now husband Bryce sent their first card when they were engaged. When the couple got married, Alison was searching for a quick way to send thank you notes. She stumbled upon a service Hallmark.com provided – submit a photo, upload addresses in a spreadsheet, and Hallmark did the rest. She was hooked. She's been sending her yearly Christmas cards through the same website ever since. Now, with two young boys to keep her busy, she appreciates the service even more.

"I could probably save some money by addressing my envelopes, adding my own stamps, and mailing my cards myself," says Alison. "But, honestly, if I didn't do it this way, my cards would never get done. To me, it's worth every penny."

Alison says having her addresses uploaded to the website has come in handy many times over the years. As long as she has internet access, all her contacts' information is at her fingertips.

"I think there are more websites that offer this service now, but I've just stuck with this one because I already have all my addresses uploaded. I make changes throughout the year so it's ready to go when I create my card."



The Christmas Cardtacular - Rebecca Brick

For Rebecca and Ben Brick, this might be the most creative time of the year. Both are professional photographers, and Ben is a graphic designer. Their holiday greeting is like no other. But one year, Rebecca and Ben discovered that they share a common interest with their friends in the field: designing and creating elaborate and unique Christmas cards. So the Bricks decided to make it really interesting—by having a contest.

And with that, the Christmas Cardtacular was born, getting bigger and better after that first contest in 2013.

"We wanted to include more than just our friends," Rebecca said. "We want to encourage other people to do something above and beyond more of the norm of having a picture made for Christmas. Have fun with the photo! It can be something fun and different, from your favorite TV show or an ad."



This is the third year of the Christmas Cardtacular. Rebecca says their friends and family really look forward to participating in the contest—and receiving what is ultimately a unique gift.

"It's really sending a little of yourself and who you are. We really have fun with it."

If you want to join the fun, send your most creative, festive card to Rebecca at rebecca@mabellephoto.net. The deadline is December 20th. The winner will be announced December 24th and will receive a one-of-a-kind handmade Christmas card ornament, designed by Rebecca and Ben.





Christmas Gifts with a Twist

By Jody Kerzman

What's on your wish list this Christmas? It's easy to let those lists get out of hand – many of us end up spending more money than we planned, or buying someone a gift just for the sake of buying something. But this year, we challenge you to shop with purpose, do something to help others, and focus on giving, rather than receiving. Here are a couple of ideas to get you started:

Limit your purchases

Christmas shopping has taken on new meaning for Jana Wisthoff in recent years. Gone are the days of buying her children every single thing on their list. Instead, Jana limits her purchases: each child receives just three gifts from their parents.

"We buy them something they want, something they need, and something to help them grow spiritually, like a Christian cd or a book," explains Jana. "Sometimes what they need is a new pair of jeans. It's not a super glamorous gift, but it's a gift."

It has changed the way she shops.

"It's made shopping easier. I don't have as much to buy, and I enjoy shopping more because I'm putting much more thought into what I'm buying for my kids," she adds. "It sounds cheap, but it really has eliminated my stress and the kids are fine. I think before, when we bought them endless gifts, they really weren't excited about any of them, because they just had too many gifts. Now, they appreciate the few gifts they do get to open. And it's made Christmas more about family and being together, which is what I think the holiday should really be about anyway."



James happy about socks - what he needed



Lucy, all smiles about the gift she wanted



Charlie after opening his spiritual growth CD

organization. We have families who get together and make fleece tie blankets to donate. It's a great way to spend time together," says Pebbles. "And, our social media campaign is a way to challenge other people to donate to our cause."

The party starts November 24 and runs through December 31. You can join at any time. Simply make a donation online to Project Ignite Light (www.ignitelight.org), take a photo of yourself wearing your favorite pajamas, and make it your profile picture on Facebook and/or Instagram with this caption:

"I'm wearing my favorite PJs with the purpose of helping hurting children of abuse through Project Ignite Light! I will be making a donation to Project Ignite Light (www.ignitelight.org) and I invite (tag friends) to the party! #projectpjparty."

How will you make this Christmas more about giving than receiving? Share your traditions (new or old) on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/inspiredwoman.

Take a Selfie

You read that correctly. Your selfie could help children of extreme child abuse throughout North Dakota. "PJs with a Purpose" is a social media event designed to inspire people to give money to Project Ignite Light, an organization that provides children with important items they need when examined for physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect.

"When I learned how many children were affected by abuse in our state, and as I learned that many kids don't even have something as basic as a pair of pajamas, as a mom, I panicked," recalls Pebbles Thompson, Project Ignite Light founder. "I couldn't stand that. I knew I had to do something to help."

And so, Project Ignite Light was born. Based in Rogers, North Dakota, the organization provides a "Bag of Hope" to children who have been seen for abuse or neglect at the state's advocacy centers. Each bag includes a fleece tie blanket, pajamas, socks, underwear, shampoo and conditioner, toothbrush and toothpaste, as well as other necessities. The organization collects donations of new two-piece pajamas and fleece tie blankets year round, but Pebbles says this time of year is a great time to start a new family tradition.

"We have families who purchase pajamas for a family member to donate to our



Project Ignite Light Bag of Hope





Puff Pastry

By Pam Vukelic

The season of hurrying and scurrying is upon us! There are programs and concerts to attend; gifts to purchase and send; and trees and stairway banisters on which we will bend our favorite garlands. And what would the holidays be without having a few friends and relatives visit? Lest this thought provokes a bit of anxiety, I have a suggestion for you.

Puff Pastry, found in the freezer section of your grocery store, is here to save the day! It is one of the most versatile items in the market, one of the most easy to use, and yet yields very special results. It can be used for everything from appetizers to desserts.

This product is a rich, flaky dough made by placing chilled butter between layers of pastry then folding and rolling it multiple times to create many layers. It can be made at home without much difficulty but what you purchase at the store is good enough that it really isn't worth the trouble. When you buy it frozen, you can keep it on hand for several months so it is ready to use at the spur of the moment.

In our local stores you can typically find puff pastry sheets and puff pastry shells. The sheets are more versatile and come two sheets to a package. There are six shells in a box.

The shells make an attractive and tasty holder for main dishes (Chicken a La King), brunch items (eggs, cheese, and ham), or dessert (berries and cream). The ingredients you can add to the shells are limitless, but they are designed to be a container. They're attractive and make a great presentation.

On to the sheets. You need not use both of them at the same time. Once the package is opened, wrap securely to guarantee shelf life is not compromised. If time allows, thaw the dough in the refrigerator. Dough will be much easier to handle. The sheet is folded in thirds, leaving you with two creases. Use a rolling pin to make the thickness of the dough even, pinching the creases together if necessary. Trim the edges to square them unless your finished item has no particular shape.

A few tips:

- Bake the dough in a preheated oven.
- Use parchment paper on your pan.
- If brushing the surface, as with an egg wash, be careful to keep the liquid off the cut edge of the dough or you may inadvertently seal the layers and inhibit rising.
- If time allows, once the item has been shaped, chill again for a few minutes to ensure the best rise.

A few very easy ideas for use:

Breadsticks: Cut a sheet of dough into strips (each third into ten or twelve pieces) and brush with milk or cream. Sprinkle with a mixture of finely grated parmesan cheese and paprika (or garlic salt). Twist each strip twice before placing on baking sheet and bake until golden. These are a fancy version of a breadstick – tasty and crispy. Alternatively, brush the strips with melted butter and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. They make a great accompaniment to ice cream or can be served at brunch.

Croutons: Cut the dough into small squares, bake and use as croutons to top a creamy soup. One large crouton could top a bowl of French Onion Soup.

Tarts or turnovers: Cut the dough into larger squares, top with thinly sliced apples and a light apricot glaze. Bake until golden. Cut into even larger squares, fill with fruit and fold into triangles to make turnovers.

Cookies or crackers: To make Palmiers, use a full sheet of dough sprinkled with a savory mix of finely grated cheese and savory spices or a mixture of your favorite sweet spices. Pick up the left edge of the dough and bring to the center of the sheet. Do the same with the right edge of the dough. Fold the dough once more, in half, as if you were closing a book. Slice the roll into about one-half inch slices. Place the slices cut side up on parchment paper and bake until golden. For extra crispy cookies, turn them over mid-way through the baking process.

Main dishes: Top a Shepherd's Pie or Chicken Pot Pie with a layer of puff pastry to create a crispy, flaky crust. Or, roll your meat filling up in a sheet of pastry jelly-roll style to create a strudel-type dish.

Wraps: An elegant twist on Pigs in a Blanket can be made using puff pastry and cocktail sausages. Wrap an olive or shrimp for a tasty appetizer.

There are so many wonderful recipes online that will provide you with specific temperatures and times. Check out epicurious.com, [Ina Garten on the Food Network](http://InaGarten.com), and PuffPastry.com. The latter site is prepared by Pepperidge Farm, the most popular manufacturer of the frozen puff pastry; it contains a wealth of recipes and tips.

If you've not used puff pastry before, you are going to be so pleasantly surprised! If you have, check out some new recipes online to broaden your repertoire, impress your guests, and streamline your holiday entertaining.



Pam Vukelic is an online FACS (Family and Consumer Sciences) instructor for the Missouri River Educational Consortium.



Helping Hungry Kids

By Jody Kerzman

No child should ever have to wonder where her next meal will come from. But that is the reality for many children. It's something Bismarck High School's Lea Geis sees first hand everyday.

"People, including me, are surprised to learn what a problem hunger is in our community," says Geis. "I think we are aware, but we don't realize it could be the person sitting next to us in class. The thing that resonates with me is that if a kid is hungry, they're not going to learn."

So Geis has made it her mission to make sure no students at BHS are too hungry to learn. She has started a food pantry at the school. It's the first of its kind; no other school in Bismarck or Mandan has such a thing.

It started when Geis applied for and won a grant through Capital Electric. She uses that money to purchase food for students in the school's Starfish program – Starfish is a program designed to help 9th graders who need extra academic, social, and emotional support. When Geis picked up her grant money, she realized there was another big need at BHS.

"I visited with some of the other groups that received grants that day and I realized there is an overlying theme in our community. That theme is hunger," says Geis. "There are a lot of hunger issues in our community and I knew I was in a position to help at least some of the hungry kids at our school."

That realization led to a brainstorm: Geis wanted to open a food pantry at Bismarck High School. Her principal immediately agreed.

"We knew there were lots of kids who could benefit from this," she says.

Geis started searching the internet, making phone calls, and visiting with local food pantries. Century Baptist Church jumped on board and held a food drive for the school's food pantry.

"We didn't really know what we needed, or what to expect," says Geis. "We were just so excited that someone wanted to help us!"

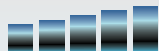
Other groups have also been eager to help out: the football boosters organized a food drive during the BHS/CHS football game, and the BHS Key Club also did a drive. But most touching for Geis, are the students who have asked if they can help.

"When we were setting up the food pantry, kids noticed something was going on. They asked questions, and when I explained it was a food pantry to help kids who need it, I was amazed at how many kids immediately asked how they could help. Our staff has been awesome too. I put out an email just the other day saying I could really use tuna helper, chicken helper, and jelly. I had four teachers drop off bags the next day. I think that speaks volumes about the teachers and the students at this school. They are always willing to help each other out, and that's a really great lesson that will help them succeed long after they graduate and leave this building."

THE FOOD PANTRY at BHS does not receive any funds. It is run completely off of donations. If you'd like to help stock the shelves at the BHS Food Pantry, Geis says there are some must-have items she likes to keep on hand. They include:

- Microwaveable foods – Easy Mac, Ramen noodles (many kids don't have access to a stove to cook meals)
- Peanut butter
- Jelly
- Bread

There are also some items to steer clear of. Geis says big bulk items are not very practical, unless she can send them home with a parent. But most times, students take food pantry items home in their backpacks, so big items are difficult to send with kids. Geis says she also tries to encourage donations that will make a meal: if you donate a can of tuna, grab a box of tuna helper as well, or a box of pasta and a jar of pasta sauce.



HERE TODAY NOT GONE TOMORROW:

Sexting

by Patrick Atkinson

It's Sunday night and family night, and everything is just about perfect. The fireplace is blazing and family stories are being told. The in-laws are over for the evening, and photos are being shown.

There's your youngest daughter at band camp, and your oldest boy grinning from a canyon's stony edge. Grandma laughs as she flips through these photos, and then laughs even harder when she sees you covered in balloons from last summer's party. Next up are the brilliantly colorful photos of your middle child's naked body standing in front of the bathroom mirror. Grandma is, uh, Grandma?

Welcome to the newest city in Unexplainable-land; sexting. Sexting is the taking and sharing of sexual photographs or explicit messages via text messaging, email, or the web. While experts differ on statistics, sexting is a new teen reality since 25% of girls and 20% of boys admit to having sexted, and 45% admit to having received a sext.

We didn't have sexting when I was a kid because, well, there were no digital cameras and there was no internet. There was, of course, Polaroid instant photography which was invented in the 1950s. Like modern digital photography, Polaroid's snap-and-peel instant photographs almost immediately created a newfound privacy since it removed the need to involve a photo-lab technician. The result was, apparently, liberating since the Polaroid Company

estimates 10% of its instant film was purchased for 'intimate' moments.

With the exception of closed-door clubs, prostitution, and pornographic profiteering, these instant photographs were usually taken, shared, and kept for oneself or just the intimate other. That's no longer the case with our children.

Thirty eight percent of teens say exchanging sexy photos and texts make dating or hooking up with others more likely, and 29% of teens believe those who exchange sexy content are 'expected' to date or hook up.

Staggering to even my well-seasoned professional imagination, though, is that 87% of all youth who send a sexual picture of themselves to another person expect the receiver to keep it private or delete it, while 71% of all youth say they would share with other people or post online an intimate photograph they received from someone else, even from their boyfriend/girlfriend.

We live in a world quite different than the one we grew up in; today's technological world means anything can be sent, accessed, copied, retrieved from deletion, posted and reposted, and seen by huge audiences... by millions... with no possibility of even the sender being able to control information once it hits the internet.

Peer pressure on children and teens can be tremendous, but while alcohol drunk or a cigarette smoked is a passing moment with little long-term consequence, sexually-themed photographs or texts can be made excruciatingly public. With just a few keyboard clicks, embarrassing words can be added, and public comments solicited from friends and strangers alike and posted. The subject is almost always humiliated and feels regret, and suffers bullying, isolation, shaming, anxiety, depression and sometimes suicide.

The digital permanency and universal titillation of sexted photographs can have lifelong, career-altering consequences... all the result of a life-altering decision, made long before the critical parts of the brain involved in decision-making fully develop around age 25.

To avoid public embarrassment, children and teens who made one bad decision can be extorted, or blackmailed into becoming someone else's unwilling sexual partner. The now-victim's agreement to consent never stays 'just once,' though, since almost any agreement to give in to extortion opens the door to permanent surrender of self to the blackmailer.

Besides public education, parents, schools, and community leader have had few successful ideas about how to stop their children from making a potentially life-altering decision like sexting. Lawmakers and law enforcement have recently stepped into this void to emphasize the serious and severe consequences of sexting. With increasing frequency, children and teens are being criminally charged with producing, distributing and possessing child pornography. If the photograph goes across state lines, which is ridiculously easy with internet access, it becomes a federal felony.

When I signed up to become a parent, I should have been made to read hundreds of pages of disclosures and sign dozens of waivers. But I didn't. I said, "Okay" and the rest, well, you know. Fortunately my children are past the age of not understanding the consequences of sexting, but for parents with children still under the age of 25, here's some pretty sound advice:

- Understand what sexting is and learn how many children do it. Google the word, read about it, and consider the possibility that your child is the one in four who has done it. Do you have five children? Do the math.
- Talk to your children about sexting so they know you are aware it exists. Remind them that once an image is sent, it can never be retrieved or controlled, and that nothing sent over the internet is ever really erased. Ever.
- Talk gently with your children about social pressures, and especially those that involve sex, sexuality, and the



possible motives of someone asking your child for sexually intimate photos. Entire for-profit websites exist of naked children who thought they were sexting to their boyfriend-today / ex-boyfriend-tomorrow or best friend. Tell them that no matter how big the social pressure is today, the potential humiliation tomorrow can be hundreds of times worse.

- Remind them that they are always responsible for their life, no one else. Buy them a copy of my book, "Message For My Child;" if you can't find it or afford it, email me at Director@GodsChild.org and I will send you a copy for free.
- And check out www.ThatsNotCool.com, a great site that also explores sexting.

Grandma loves you and her grandchildren. She wants to hear their stories and see their photos. She just doesn't want to find on the internet, or be told about, the photos your son or daughter snapped for a friend thinking they were going to disappear in minute, yet are now floating around forever.

You don't want that, do you, Grandma? Grandma?



Patrick Atkinson is director of the God's Child Project in Bismarck.

About The Author: Bismarck-native Patrick Atkinson is the founder and Executive Director of the award-winning GOD'S CHILD Project (www.GodsChild.org) international network of charities, which includes the 'Institute for Trafficked, Exploited, & Missing Persons' (www.ITEMP.org); North Dakota's first and oldest dedicated anti-human trafficking program. Atkinson is a 3x national book award winner whose writings appear in 13 languages worldwide. He currently resides in Bismarck, on Hippo Wallow Pond outside of Minneapolis, and in Antigua Guatemala.

he said
she said

Memories Are Yours for the Making This Holiday Season

by Annette Martel and Kelly Hagen



She Said

Growing up, my family had a few Christmas traditions. The most important one was watching “Christmas Vacation,” and then doing our best to integrate the movie’s one-liners into our holiday conversations. My go-to phrase at the time was “the jelly-of-the-month club: the gift that keeps on giving the whole year.” In fact, I found this so humorous as a child, that I actually gave that gift to a friend one time. That was the real gift: humor. Plus jelly.

Most of the time, Christmas was just about being with family, which, by the way, is all that Clark Griswold ever really wanted in the first place.

These days, Kelly and I are the ones trying to provide an interesting and memorable holiday experience for our children. In a way, we’re probably the anti-Griswolds, because we don’t do much in the way of decorating, other than the obligatory tree with lights. Even then, it is the plastic tree that already has the lights attached to it. So, I guess minimalist decorating is part of our family tradition. As well as joyfully watching Kelly snort and snuff and swear inventively while trying to remember how that tree goes together each year. We make popcorn and laugh; it’s a blast.

Another tradition growing up was to gather around the piano, which I would play, and we would sing Christmas carols. Although this

sounds very Norman Rockwell, it was usually my little brother and me, and it would eventually devolve into making up silly words and purposely singing off key, but it was definitely a tradition. My brother, by the way, turned out to be a very talented musician, so it gives me great pride to know that I was his first musical collaborator.

It also gives me pride to know that my kids get to grow up in North Dakota, so close to so much family. Lights brighten the season. Carols warm the heart. But when it comes right down to it, the best tradition is spending time with loved ones, whether it’s chatting via FaceTime or spending actual face time together. That’s a tradition I hope carries on for generations.



We're a young family, so there's always room to invent new traditions. Perhaps the parents aren't as young as they could be, but the children certainly are. The boy child is one-year-old, and the girl child is five. So at least one of them is probably going to be expecting presents and cookies and a tree, at least.

The male child is still very young, as I said, and so he really doesn't know what's happening. Sure, he went through the whole festivities last year, during his first few months of life, but he wasn't taking notes. Maybe he noticed the colorfully wrapped boxes surrounding a fake pine tree covered in flashing lights and trinkets placed off to the side in our living room, but I'm willing to bet he didn't.

He'll notice these things this year, but will he know to expect these things to return again in a mere 365 days afterwards? Doubtful. I could tell him, but he's not going to understand.

Christmas is about family; more so than any other holiday, especially Arbor Day, unless you're a tree. And I'm not Groot.

I love my family more than anything else. So it follows that I love Christmas. I'm not in love with the expanded responsibilities of decorating and shopping and planning out a memorable occasion for the two aforementioned children who live in my house and depend on me to do stuff for them. But I enjoy the wonder in their eyes, spending quality moments with them and lording presents over their heads as incentive for them to be "good boys and girls" all year long. Or at least they should be good for two-thirds

of the month of December. Otherwise some weird elf creature won't ride down a fireplace we don't have to place presents in the children's socks.

We're still trying to figure out Christmas, all of us. The boy with limited experience and ability to make long-term memories, and the girl who is just beginning to form her lifelong perspectives on what makes the world work. In addition, this guy writing these words and the perfect, young lady who wrote the words above my own, together we are just learning how to make Christmas special for our two special, little people. Anything is possible. The world is our canvas.

Make some great memories this Christmas season, if you can. We're going to try.



Columnists Annette Martel and Kelly Hagen are married, have the two kids, and wish you the happiest of holidays. They can be reached at shesaidhesaidcolumn@gmail.com.

Bismarck Art & Galleries Association

Do all of your holiday baking without stepping a foot in the kitchen!

Cookie Walk

Dozens of holiday cookies & candies sold by the pound.

Saturday, December 12

10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Or until the goodies are gone.

BAGA, 422 E Front Avenue, Bismarck



Jennifer Strange: Tapping Into Stories of the Bakken

by Jessie Veeder

"I look at the geese flying overhead and I can relate to them, the way they fly with their necks out."

This is Jennifer Strange and this is her way of taking cues from her world to inspire her work.

"I'm a Dakotan at heart," declares this storyteller, Sioux Falls, South Dakota Native, fifth generation "Missouri River Rat" and self-proclaimed creative spirit as she goes on to detail how she found her way to Killdeer, North Dakota, to work to inspire residents to tell their own stories.

"It seems to be a pattern in my life to end up in small, remote communities," says Strange. "I identify a niche I can fill and do what I can to fill it."

The story of Strange's soul-searching and arms-open life experience seems to set the stage for the work she's doing in western North Dakota as

a writer, self-employed publicist, event planner, and founder/executive director of the literary nonprofit Dunn County Writers (DCW).

And what she can provide to this small community begins with her own story of leaving Sioux Falls after high school in 1985 to head south to live with a friend in Santa Fe, New Mexico where she washed dishes in a Pizza Hut.

"I knew since first grade that I wanted to be a writer. I just didn't know what that meant," explained Strange. "But I felt I needed life experience, so I went out and got it."

Strange's search for life experience found her in Sydney, Australia before moving back to the states in 1990, ready to pursue and complete a double major in Liberal Arts and Journalism from The University of Kansas in 1994.

Creating a Career Path

While Strange was finishing her education she worked at a community mercantile and was sent to Washington D.C. with the National Coalition against the Misuse of Pesticides. There she learned first hand about the moral conflict associated with producing needs for a nation, a lesson and awareness she would bring with her years later in her move to western North Dakota's oil country.

"We all rely on natural resources to survive," said Strange, who took the question "How do we find a functional balance on this planet?" to her new career in Alaska. There she worked as the managing editor of *The Cordova Times*, a newspaper on the Prince William Sound. Her work on resource development issues won several Alaska Press Coverage awards and

her reporting of the 10th anniversary of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill was published throughout the Pacific Northwest.

But Strange's career path and journey of self-discovery didn't stop there. Strange took a four month break in 1999 where she re-centered and got in touch with nature, living with her dog in a tent in Wyoming's Bighorn Mountains. Then she moved to southern Oregon where she published an alternative newspaper and was self-employed for 15 years as a writer, editor, and marketing consultant specializing in sustainable lifestyles, food, and travel. Strange's love for literature and stories inspired her to found a poetry group and serve as marketing director of the literary nonprofit, An Association of Writers, for four years, helping grow their membership, produce events, and lead the group through the publication of their first book.

And as Strange finally found her footing in a world of telling stories, in 2006, a friend set her up on a date with Terry Moore and she fell in love. The pair was married in 2009, and, at 41, Strange started a new chapter in her life.

Building a life in oil country

Starting new in oil country is a common theme that runs along roads lined with tankers and dusty pickups. And so Strange and her new husband found themselves looking east after Moore, who retired from Hewlett Packard in 2007, lost a huge portion of his retirement as the economy struggled.

"It was a moment to reinvent ourselves," said Strange about researching western North Dakota opportunities and finding the small cowboy town of Killdeer to be a natural fit, full of character and opportunity.

Moore, who went on to earn his commercial drivers license, was offered a job driving truck for Rud Transportation, a locally owned and operated business out of Center, ND, and the couple made their move in 2013.

"Working for a family-operated business fit our values," said Strange about her husband's new career choice and her realization that she was an environmentalist about to rely on an income from the oil industry. But her open mind and investigative journalist background found her seeing and understanding both sides of the story, stories that she realized needed the opportunity to be told, a niche Strange knew she could help fill.

And so the Dunn County Writers group was formed with the mission to capture and chronicle the voice of a population in transition. The group is dedicated to building community around the cultural and literary arts by holding monthly writing sessions, publishing projects, and events that invite and encourage writing across a broad and inclusive base of background, topic and life experience.

"If we don't capture our stories, then who will?" asked Strange as she goes on to explain that the DCW is comprised

of 13 individuals from all ages and backgrounds, about half locals and half new residents. The group, managed by a board of three, with Strange acting as the executive director, meets at the Dunn County Museum building each month. They participate in writing exercises and share their work. In April of this year the organization was officially incorporated as a literary non-profit.

"No two people, when writing about the same place, will define its attributes exactly the same way," Strange recognizes.

But what has been most exciting about the work that the DCW has been able to do is to provide the community with an opportunity to engage with nationally renowned writers. Since its inception, Strange has produced and publicized four cultural and literary arts events at Killdeer's newly built High Plains Cultural Center, and co-produced one at the Dunn County Historical Society, including programs with renowned and award winning authors Debra Marquart and Pam Houston.

In addition, Strange's prior experience inspired her to help the DCW through three group submissions in western North Dakota publications and they are scheduled to release their second annual booklet of original writing this winter.

"We came to North Dakota so Terry could earn back his retirement and to embed ourselves in this culture and see what good we could do," said Strange, who will graduate with a Masters

of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from Pacific University in January.

And as she helps others tell their stories, her story continues. Strange has plans in the works for a book about being an investigative journalist embedded in the Bakken. She will also continue her work as a self-employed writer, serving on the Dunn County Historical Society and Museum committee, and standing firm in her mission of using her passions and experience to help enrich a community.

"I'm so proud and humbled by the people involved in the DCW mission," said Strange "People here are hungry for cultural and literary arts and their work is helping me understand this region. My goal is to capture and chronicle the voice of this generation—to make something happen with what we write."

And so, like the geese she sees flying with their necks out, Jennifer Strange has found herself in a new home, with wings outstretched and the best view for the story.



Jessie Veeder is a singer, writer and photographer who lives and works on her family's cattle ranch in Western North Dakota with her husband, Chad.



**community
contributors**



Charles Hall Youth Services

Gearing Up Youth for Positive Life Choices

By Jody Kerzman

Give us a little history about Charles Hall Youth Services.

Charles Hall began 50 years ago as a mission of the United Church of Christ to provide boarding home services to Native American youth from the Three-Affiliated Tribes of Ft. Berthold. Hall Home opened to serve its first youth in 1966, Good Bird Home opened in 1970, and Case Home opened in 1987. All three homes are located in Bismarck. In its early years, many youth lived at Charles Hall for one to three years. Today's youth, on average, are in placement for six to nine months to complete the ESSENTIAL Program and transition into a new foster home, back home to biological parents, or to a different level of foster care.

Who do you help?

Each year, the agency serves close to 90 youth, ages 10 – 19, of all backgrounds. Children enter Charles Hall for many reasons: abuse and neglect; substance abuse and/or addiction; unruliness or delinquency; family conflict; school issues; and, issues resulting in court-ordered removal from the home environment.

How are you different from other agencies like yours?

Charles Hall is unique because it serves at-risk youth within the community, interfacing with area schools, medical providers, and other organizations. The three residences – Hall Home, Good Bird Home, and Case Home – also distinguish Charles Hall from other residential providers. At-risk youth in care experience living in a residential home, within a neighborhood in the local community, with staff who care for youth much like parents – preparing meals, teaching youth how to do laundry, assisting with homework, and instructing youth in those things that lead to healthier, happier relationships and daily living competencies. Charles Hall Youth Services is the only community-based, residential foster care agency in central North Dakota to serve both boys and girls.

How can people donate to your organization?

There are several ways to make a gift to Charles Hall Youth Services:

- Donations can be sent to Charles Hall Youth Services, PO Box 1995, Bismarck, ND 58502.
- Credit card payments can be made online at the agency's website: www.charleshallyouthservices.com. Click on "Make a Difference-Donate Now" to donate.
- Call Rhonda Styles-Rohde at 701-255-2773, ext. 301, to learn about giving options.
- Stop by Charles Hall Youth Services at 513 E. Bismarck Expressway in Bismarck.

What are your needs right now if someone would like to donate?

Monetary donations always are needed. Each year, the organization must raise close to \$400,000 just to maintain current programming. Many times youth enter Charles Hall with literally nothing more than the clothes on their backs. Monetary donations can provide much-needed clothing. And, because Charles Hall youth live in actual homes, the agency also needs regular house hold items, including twin sheets, pillow cases, mattress covers, towels, wash clothes, pots and pans, cooking utensils, and silverware. With Christmas approaching, gift cards are especially needed – those gift cards enable staff to purchase items specifically for each child. Gift cards and monetary gifts also can assist with fresh food purchases and special holiday outings, such as going to the movies. The agency also requests stocking stuffer items, including things like scented lotions, lip gloss, books, journals, and socks.

For more information about Charles Hall Youth Services, persons can call 701-255-2773 or visit the agency's website: www.charleshallyouthservices.com.



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East Coast Adventure: Exploring Boston

By Deb Seminary



The weather forecast was not on our side. There was a hurricane warning to the south and rain in the forecast for our first couple days in the city. It didn't seem to matter. We were going to Boston!

It was chilly and drizzly when we arrived, but nothing we couldn't handle. Our first stop was the Harvard campus for a few history lessons and some general sightseeing. Our tour guide, Brian, is a self-described history buff, so he was a wealth of information throughout the weekend.

After check-in at our hotel we headed to The Freedom Trail and the Old North Church. Walking the cobblestones and experiencing the interesting architecture of the neighborhood just added to the experience.

We had a wonderful dinner at La Famiglia Giorgio's and on the walk back to the hotel we learned a few more interesting facts about Boston. We passed by the Green Dragon Tavern, which has a very storied past. The Green Dragon was established in 1654 and apparently Paul Revere and John Hancock were regulars back in the day.

Saturday morning's weather was not ideal for our walking tour of Boston, so we made quick work of a bit more of The Freedom Trail, The Granary Burial Ground, Faneuil Hall and a few more sites before we warmed up at Quincy Market.

One of the best things about these trips, in my opinion, is the fact that everyone is free to go off on their own and explore. A couple ladies met up with friends for the afternoon, a couple more went on a 'Duck Boat' tour of the Harbor, a few broke off to do a little shopping and the rest of us went to visit the Bull and Finch Pub, or Cheers. We also got our photo taken with some gentlemen from a wedding party, but that is a whole other story.

That evening we were treated to the Broadway production of Cinderella. The weather had improved and it was a nice, quick walk from our hotel to the gorgeous Boston Opera House.

We boarded our bus for New Hampshire on a sunny Sunday morning. The leaves were not quite at their peak, but there was still a lot of beautiful scenery. The covered bridges and abundance of trees made some great photo ops. We also stopped for a bit of shopping, of course.

We spent the night in Montpelier, Vermont and again, some took advantage of their time to explore the capitol city before we headed back to Boston.

Although I am sad I will not be joining them in 2016, I am very excited that Jody and Marci have decided to continue with the Inspired Woman trips. You can read all about the next destination on the next page.



Deb Seminary is former co-editor of *Inspired Woman*



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This list of Capital City Arts & Culture Events is provided by Dakota West Arts Council. If you have questions or would like to have an event listed, please contact Eileen at Dakota West Arts Council (DWCA) dwac4arts@hotmail.com. Dakota West Arts Council is a non-profit organization that leads, advocates and advances arts and culture in Bismarck and the capital region. Learn more at dakotawestarts.org.

December 2015

December 1-19

Bismarck Art & Gallery Association Member Artist Holiday Show | Reception, Dec. 4, 5-7 pm | bismarck-art.org

December 3

Gallery 522 & 106 Antiques Holiday Open House | Anderson Building At Main & Mandan Streets, 4-6 p.m. | Free and open to the public

December 3

Bismarck High School Band Jazz Night | (Jazz I & Jazz Too) - Knaak at 7:00pm

December 4-January 2

Bismarck Downtown Artists Co-op's "Fifth Foot in the Door" Exhibit | 4th and Thayer Downtown | Opening Reception Dec 4, 5:30-8:30 | Free and open to the public

December 5

Sleepy Hollow Theatre & Art Park's Holiday High Tea & Merriment | Vintage Style show, Silent Auction & Santa Lucia Presentation | Trinity Community Center, 3 p.m. | Reservations: 319-0894

December 5

The Reason: A Family Christmas Experience | Bismarck Event Center, 7 p.m. | bismarck-eventcenter.com

December 6

Messiah | 7:30 PM Trinity Lutheran Church | www.messiahbismarck.com

December 7

Simile Jazz Band Concert | Simile Middle School Auditorium, 7:30pm

December 7

Wind Orchestra, Tri-School Beginner Band & Steel Drum Concert | St. Mary's Central High School Gym, 7:30 p.m.

December 8

Simile 7th & 8th Grade Band Concert | Simile Middle School Gym, 7:30pm

December 8

Wachter 7th & 8th Grade Band Concerts | Wachter Middle School Cafetorium—6:30 & 7:30pm

December 9

West State "A" Saxophone and Percussion Solo /Ensemble Contest | University of Mary—All Day

December 10

Bismarck High School Choir & Orchestra Holiday Concert | Knaak, 6:00 pm

December 10

Horizon Orchestra & Elementary Orchestra Holiday Concert | HMS Gym, 7:30pm

December 10

Cirque Dreams Holidaze | Bismarck Event Center, 7:30 p.m. | Bismarckeventcenter.com

December 11-13

Northern Plains Ballet Presents "The Nutcracker" | December 11 7:30 | December 12 2:30 and 7:30 | December 13 2:30 | Belle Mehus Auditorium | Tickets range from \$16-30 with discounts for seniors and children

December 11-23

Holiday Open Studio | Art Gallerie on Main | Opening Reception, December 11, 5-8 p.m. | artgallerieonmain.com

December 12

Bismarck Art & Gallery Association's Cookie Walk | Gallery, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

December 14

Bismarck High School Holiday Concert | – Wind Ensemble, Concert Choir & Chamber Orchestra | Belle Mehus, 7:30pm

December 14

Century High School Choir Holiday Concert | CHS Auditorium—All Day

December 14

Legacy High School Holiday Celebration-Freshman & Concert Bands | LHS Auditorium, 7:30pm

December 14

Simile /Elementary Orchestras—Holiday Concert | --Miller/Murphy/Saxvik/Pioneer/Sunrise | Simile Middle School Gym, 7:30pm

December 15

Century High School Holiday Concert | Chorale, Concert Choir, Wind Ensemble & Chamber Orchestra | Belle Mehus, 7:30pm

December 15

Legacy High School Choir Holiday Concerts | --9th Grade Choir & Prep Choirs | LHS Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.

December 15

Wachter 7th & 8th Grade Choirs Holiday Concert | WMS Cafetorium, 7:00 p.m.

December 15

Rush Hour Concert -- Trio Apollo | Bismarck-Mandan Symphony Orchestra | Trinity Lutheran Church, 5:45 p.m. | bismarckmandansymphony.org

December 15

Flickertail Woodcarvers Whittle-in | Project by Bob Pedigo, too sharpening | Trinity Lutheran Church | Flickertail.org

December 16

SMCHS Christmas Choral Concert | 7:30 p.m., University of Mary Annunciation chapel | Free and open to the public | www.singingsaints.com

December 16-17

Lorie Line & Her Fab Five | Belle Mehus Auditorium | Show: 7:30 pm | Bismarckeventcenter.com

December 16

BSC Annual Holiday Concert | Sidney J. Lee Auditorium, BSC Campus | Facebook/Bismarck State College Music Department

December 17

Bismarck High School 9th & 10th Grade Concert Band | Holiday Concert, Knaak, 7:30 p.m.

December 17

Legacy High School Holiday Concert | —Wind Ensemble, Concert Choir and Chamber Orchestra | LHS Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.

December 17

Wachter & Feeder Elementary Orchestra's Holiday Concert | WMS Cafetrium, 7:30 p.m.

December 18-19

Central Dakota Children's Choir Christmas Concert | Belle Mehus Auditorium, 7:30 pm | For More Information: cdcc@aboutcdcc.org or 701-258-6516

December 21

Century High School Concert & Freshman Orchestra Holiday Concert | CHS Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.

December 21

Legacy High School Concert Orchestras Holiday Concert | LHS Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.

December 21

Simle Holiday Choral Concert | All Choirs | Bismarck Event Center, 6:30 p.m.

January 2016**January 6**

Monthly Art Workshop | Art Gallerie on Main, 6 p.m. | artgallerieonmain.com

January 7-8

ND High School All-State Auditions | Bismarck State College | January 9 | All State Orchestra Auditions | Bismarck State College

January 13

Legacy High School Band Concert | --Wind Ensemble | LHS Auditorium, 9:00 & 10:45am

January 14

Horizon, Simle & Wachter "January Jazz Jamboree" | Legacy Auditorium—Time TBA

January 16

Murder Mystery & Fire | Bismarck-Mandan POP Series | Belle Mehus, 7:30 p.m. | bismarckmandansymphony.org

January 15-16

11th Annual Blizzard Bluegrass Weekend with Cotton Wood | Bismarck State College, Sidney J. Lee Auditorium, 7:30 p.m. | Featuring "Nightflyer" from Ohio | "Learn a Bluegrass Song" workshop, January 16, 2-4 p.m. | cottonwoodbluegrass.com

January 19

Flickertail Woodcarvers Whittle-in | Project Snow Snakes | Trinity Lutheran Church | Flickertail.org

January 21

Legacy High School Winter Percussion Concert | LHS Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.

January 22-24

UND Honor Choir, Grand Forks

January 24

Million Dollar Quartet | Broadway Musical, Bismarck Event Center | Show: 7 pm | Bismarckeventcenter.com

January 24

"Bring Home the Beethoven" | Missouri Valley Chamber Orchestra | Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, 7 p.m. | 801 E Denver Ave, Bismarck | mvco@mvco.net

January 28

Bismarck High School Band Dessert Night (Jazz I & Jazz Too) | Knaak, 7:30 p.m.

January 29

Jason Aldean with Thomas Rhett and A Thousand Horses | Bismarck Event Center | Show: 7:30 pm | Bismarckeventcenter.com

January 29-30

University of Mary Jazz Festival—Jazz Ensemble & Jazz II | University of Mary

January 30

"Music Needs U"
Central Dakota Children's Choir -- 6th Grade Choir Festival | Simle Middle School | For More Information: cdcc@aboutcdcc.org or 701-258-6516

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Patrick Atkinson, Founder and Executive Director

