

Inspired *Woman*

April / May 2012
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**WHO
INSPIRES
YOU?**

FIRST PLACE WINNER
Cheryl McCormack
with her inspiration
Missy Axt



Women in Business

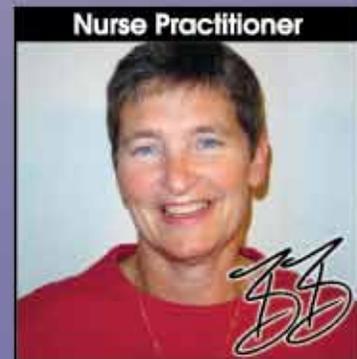
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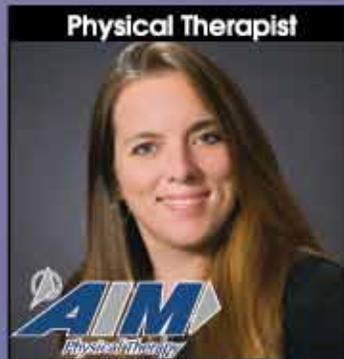
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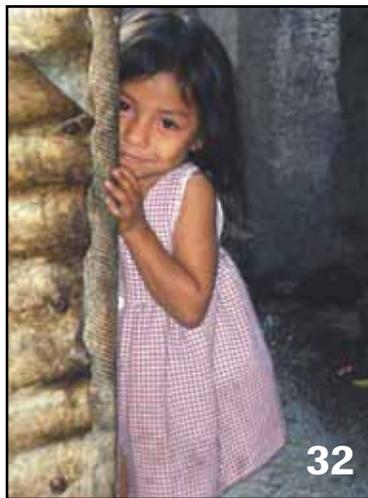




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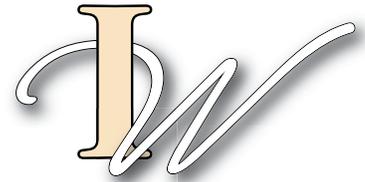
22



32



26



6 Who Inspires You?

First Place Winner

Cheryl McCormack

Second Place Winner

Kayla Matzke Newbanks

Third Place Winner

Joanne Kabanuck

14 Who Inspires You?

A Beautiful Woman

My Mom, A Positive Influence

16 Who Inspires You?

Photo page

18 Home

It's the Mix, Not the Match

20 Slice of Inspiration

Mother and Daughter Artists

22 Next Chapter for Bismarck Library

24 Arthritis

More than just joint pain

26 Remember Home Ec?

28 Lisa's Gluten Free & More

30 Dining with Diabetes

32 Bringing Change to Africa

34 Sandi's Heart

Editor's Notes

I have a lot of people to thank for making this issue possible. First of all, I want to thank my advisory board who read every entry for our 'Who Inspires You' contest. (probably more than once.) There were 14 great stories and it was extremely difficult to choose the winners.

Thank you to the sponsors who provided the prizes. It is nice to be able to reward the writers for their sweat and tears. We have listed our sponsors on page 17.

And, thank you to everyone who entered the contest. You all had wonderful stories to share and I hope we can print each one in the months ahead.

That is one thing I really like about Inspired Woman. We all have stories to share about friends, relatives, ourselves. These pages will always be full of inspiring stories of local woman who do amazing things.

Deb

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*“I wanna give her the world,
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I wanna be her mom
for as long as I can.
And I wanna live every moment
until that day comes.
I wanna show her what it means
to be loved.”*

Everlasting Grace

Brave parents give unconditional love

by Cheryl McCormack

It was difficult to hold back the stinging tears in my eyes as Mark Schultz belted out the lyrics to his song, "What It Means to be Loved," at the Belle Mehus Auditorium, one evening in late October...just days after my newborn niece, Grace Mary Axt, was laid to rest in a tiny casket; carried protectively by my grieving brother's strong arms.

Baby "Gracie" was born with a neural tube defect, known as anencephaly, in which the fetus has very minimal development of their brain. The skull and skin that protects the brain does not form, leaving the remaining brain tissue exposed. A baby born with anencephaly has zero chance of long-term survival and most are lucky to live through labor and delivery. The defect is present within the first month of pregnancy, when the neural tube neglects to fold and close between the third and fourth week of development. My brother, Jeff, and his wife, Missy, learned of their baby's condition just as they were headed into their third month of pregnancy.

After hearing the doctor's prognosis for Grace, the couple was given two options-terminate the pregnancy or try to carry her to term, God willing. Jeff and Missy were going to have to make the most important decision of their

lives, thus far. However, it didn't take them long to come to a mutual consensus. They chose life for their baby, knowing the final outcome would be devastating. They wanted a chance to meet their child and love on her as much as they possibly could. They longed for memories of their first-born child to carry with them on the long journey that lie before them. Grace was growing and living off of her mother in utero. Her little hands and feet were being molded by the hands of God. How could they possibly end the beautiful life that was being created within Missy's womb?!? They decided to leave Grace's future in God's hands, knowing full well that their baby would be lucky to survive labor, let alone minutes, hours, or days following her birth.

What Jeff and Missy had to do next is unimaginable! They had to tell their family and friends the devastating news. Not only were they going to lose their baby, a granddaughter, niece, cousin, and special friend would be lost to all of those that knew and loved the Axts. I still remember the heartbreak, disbelief, and denial. There were many days of questioning how God could create an innocent baby, so perfect and sweet, without the most functional organ in the human body. And why Jeff and Missy? They had

desired a child for well over a year and were elated when they found out they were pregnant. Grace was loved and needed from that very moment.

Unfortunately, we can't stop the hands of time. Between appointments and the work on their farm, the two of them kept rather busy. The summer months brought many distractions-planting, haying, spraying and harvest, which were a godsend. Missy spent her days at the McClusky Clinic as a devoted and loving nurse. Before long, she began to feel all the normal pregnancy symptoms-the first kick, bouts of hiccups, somersaults, being nudged in the ribs (many times!), and the 20 week ultrasound. They were having a girl! With each changing season, Gracie grew and became more and more active. The pregnancy was as normal as could be. Jeff and Missy had to pinch themselves to remind them of what lie ahead.

The closer they came to their October 8 due date, the more pressing it became to start planning. Not the nursery theme or a closet full of cute, little sleepers; rather, funeral arrangements. Planning a birth and a funeral all at once. Jeff and Missy discovered an organization ran by monks, called The Trappist Monk Casket Company, that donates or gives caskets at a reduced



do-yawn, coo, drink from a bottle, and even wet a diaper! After being baptized and confirmed, she was able to meet both sets of grandparents, numerous aunts and uncles, and many special friends.

Throughout Grace's day, there were instances when they'd thought they'd lost her. She had a couple of apnea episodes, where her breathing became irregular. After some skin-to-skin contact with her parents, she came to again. During the second scare, Jeff whispered to his little girl, "Just give me two more hours, Gracie. I'm not ready yet." And that's exactly what she did. She passed away, peacefully, two hours later and was pronounced dead at 11:39pm. She went from the arms of her parents' directly into Jesus' loving embrace. Missy and Jeff had guarded and protected Grace for nine months. Now it was Grace's turn to protect her mommy and daddy with her beautiful, angel wings.

Her funeral was held days later. She looked like a precious, little dolly all swaddled up in her pink, John Deere blanket. Her daddy had picked out a toy John Deere tractor to rest in the grave with her. He bought a matching one to keep for himself. Across her chest lay a butterfly rosary. Butterflies became Gracie's little sign-the sign of resurrection. At the cemetery, Jeff carried his little girl in that tiny casket to the spot she'd be laid to rest, near an evergreen tree. He needed to hold her just one last time! Family and friends gathered together and mourned the loss of one very special, baby girl.

Grace was surrounded by those that loved her every minute of her life. All she knew was love! She was born and died on the same day. However, in her short fifteen hours of life, she touched more lives than some people do in an entire lifetime! That little bundle of joy had developed quite a fan club, via a caring bridge website that Missy had created. She used the site to channel all of her emotions and easily keep everyone up-to-date. Lots of prayers have been and still continue to be lifted up to heaven for the Axt family.

As a mother of a sweet and vibrant two-year-old girl, I am truly inspired by my sister-in-law, Missy. She went



cost to families that have lost an infant. After ordering a casket from them, they made their way to the local cemetery to pick out a plot. As they were walking around the cemetery, little Gracie was kicking up a storm in her mama's womb, making the moment that much more surreal.

October had finally arrived and with it came bittersweet feelings and emotions. Jeff and Missy were excited to meet Grace, but at the same time not ready to say goodbye. They scheduled their induction date for October 19, as most anencephalic babies do not go into labor on their own. And then they waited.

Grace Mary Axt was born October 20, 2011 at 8:35am, via cesarean section, after a long and unsuccessful attempt at an induced labor. She weighed in at 6 lbs, 9oz and was 19" long. She had soft, dark hair at the nape of her neck. She had her daddy's long fingers and strong hands. Her mouth, chin, and the little toes on her feet were just like her father's. And from her mommy, she inherited her tiny ears, nose, and the most beautiful eyes! Missy said it best when she said, "Looking into her eyes was like looking directly into the eyes of God." She had the best features of both of her parents and she truly was beautiful! Gracie took everyone by surprise, as she was able to do many things that most anencephalic babies aren't typically able to



through an entire pregnancy, watching her belly grow and move with the passing months, knowing that in the end she'd have to say goodbye. There was no guarantee that she'd even have the opportunity to meet and love on Grace before that goodbye. What a selfless thing to do! She has weathered the storm with so much strength and courage, making sure that Grace's life would not be in vain. Missy's love for her daughter is so very genuine and unconditional. Simply stated, Missy is an amazing mom!

After leaving the Mark Schultz concert that evening, I felt so fortunate to have met my niece, Grace. And even though Jeff and Missy only got to "hold her hand" for a short while, I am certain that Grace definitely knew "what it meant to be loved."

Cheryl McCormack is a CNA at Missouri Slope Lutheran Care Center. Creative writing has always been one of her favorite pastimes.



Author's Note:

Missy and Jeff are still coping with the loss of their daughter. There is not a day that passes that they don't long for their baby girl. Missy has turned to blogging and public speaking to help her cope with Gracie's death and to educate oth-

ers about infant loss. Her blog can be found at the following address: <http://graceful-butterfly.blogspot.com/>

Since this article was written, Missy has started a project in honor of Grace, called "Everlasting Grace." Handmade blankets, hats, and booties will be donated to the St. Alexius NICU, where Gracie was well cared for during her 15 hours of life. Each blanket will have a copy of Grace's story attached to it. "Everlasting Grace" is a way to help support families that are often times dealing with unexpected circumstances; every newborn baby will have a "blankie" to snuggle with and hat to keep them warm while in the NICU. This will be an on-going project, as Missy plans on replenishing St. Alexius' stock every so many months. Anyone interested in contributing to this project through their skills or monetary donations may contact Missy via email at hilzende@hotmail.com or by phone at 701-363-2451.

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Great Aunt Grace

The keeper of the land,
keeper of my tradition



by Kayla Matzke Newbanks

I rolled out the pie dough as evenly as I could, gently pressing the rolling pin down all directions. My great aunt Grace corrected me, telling me I was putting too much weight on the pin. It needed to be effortless, a simple motion repeated to create the paper-thin crust.

Right before high school, I was spending a week of summer at Grace's farm east of McClusky, North Dakota. I came to learn how to make the perfect pie, to soak up all of her knowledge about the simple pleasures in life, like making the best dough recipe for German kneophla.

Like my mother, I spent some time each summer at the farm, canning beans, picking potato bugs off of the potatoes plants in the garden, painting fences, and playing in the barn. But it never really struck me until I was 13 that the farm has been Grace's home since birth. The old white farmhouse she grew up in used to stand 50 feet south of her current doorway. The thousands of acres Grace and her husband farmed is the same land my great grandfather purchased when he came to North Dakota.

As she corrected me again in her stern German way about my dough rolling, I breathed in the familiar aroma of her kitchen, a combination of dill, hints of the mornings' coffee and real cream. Grace was an idol to me, the closest thing I had to a blood grandmother. She was the keeper of tradition, a link to the past and a cord connecting me to the magnificent, do-it-all women relatives I never knew – women with no dishwashers, no Walmarts, and no other way of carrying on everyday life without the skills their mother's taught them.

The farm lies in the pothole region of the state, flat prairies pocked with pond-like depressions. Between this desolate,

flat land and the empty skies lies my family story. To me, Grace was the keeper of this land's history.

When I roamed the vast farmyard, I could envision the old two-story farmhouse and Grace's stories that went with it. I imagined my great grandmother on the porch, her apron revealing the pooch of her lower belly stretched from bearing twelve children. A tight bun clenched atop her head, she's banging the supper bell just before sunset.

Near the sunflower field I could imagine my own grandmother – a woman I never knew – posing for one of those black and white pictures in a musty album. Names I'd heard before and faces I'd seen in yellowed photos came alive. The farm became more than Grace's home, the place we spent holidays; it became my past, my history. My roots were deeper than those of the countless summer's harvest of durum and barley. Along with the crops, I grew from this place.

As a girl, I'd walk to the field near the old railroad tracks, to pick chokecherries. By late afternoon on most summer days, I was sent out to Grace's raspberries lining the Quonset. Not long after I located the ripest of berries, Grace would join me with her pail and straw hat. Her fine-boned feminine frame still strong, she would squat, examining her plants. Reviewing my progress, she would advise me on which berries should be picked and tell me to look around the whole bush for the fruit. "Here, let me show you. You have to look around the entire shrub for berries. See?" she would say. If only then I would have realized all the value in Grace's knowledge and appreciated her simple lessons.

As I neared adulthood the farm became proof of my long-dead relatives existence, and their story was mine. After

hearing some of the farm's past from Grace and paging through worn photo albums, I couldn't wander the farm without feeling a connection deeper than blood to these people I never knew.

Today as Grace has completed weekly rounds of chemo, fighting her second battle with breast cancer in almost a decade – at 76, a fight she might not win – everyday activities like baking pies and gardening are put aside. Her life is different without hair and a left breast. At the end of August on her birthday, my mother and I drove 70 miles to the farm to celebrate Grace's birthday. "I'll put on my wig," she said when mom told her we were coming up to celebrate. Thunderheads tailed us as we drove along Highway 200 to the farm. We passed farmers combining fields, trying to finish harvesting before the storm. The scenes out the window only reminded me that illness and age had seized the vital woman I adored, a woman who should have been caught up in harvest too. Driving down that lonely two-lane highway I wondered what would become of my family's long tradition of working the land.

As we pulled into the driveway, Grace greeted us at the door like always. Her salt and pepper wig wasn't the same as her sun-kissed light brown hair. Her body was smaller and her skin paler. Grace moved slower as she led us from the atrium to her kitchen. Her body seemed weary from a fight. Her freezer wasn't filled with prime cuts of beef from the last butchering and homemade buns frozen for summer sandwiches; it was stocked with TV dinners for the days she couldn't find the strength to leave her bed. I realized her kitchen was lonelier and her garden smaller. The land is emptier, too, since my aunt stopped farming it and rented it out. Driving home that night after visiting, I wished I could travel back to the summer days of picking raspberries and cooking with my beloved aunt whose days are dwindling.

Months later, as the cold of winter settled among the prairies sucking all the life out of the stubble of wheat fields, my mother told me Grace's cancer had moved into her brain. My throat swelled and my stomach churned; it became real to me that her fate was terminal. Tumors were cluttering her brain like weeds. Her eyesight and hearing started to fade. Like the winter's long hold over the prairie my aunt's cancer had seized the strong woman I so admired.

"Is that Tiffany?" Grace said, mistaking me for my sister, as I entered the house during my last visit at Christmastime. She sat immobile on the couch with a quilt on her lap. "Come sit next to me," she said. Her head was swollen, and the clear light blue of her eyes seemed murky and gray. I'd never seen her so frail. Tears flooded down my cheeks as she made small talk with me. I hoped she couldn't see them but I knew they were clear, even to her worn sight, as she stared at me. I told her about the supper my mom and cousins were preparing in her kitchen.

"Be sure to check those potatoes," Grace said. "The cream will curdle if you don't watch them. They need to be checked," she said with the same attention to detail she always had when she was in the kitchen. It's always been Grace's concern for details and love for those she was serving that made all of the meals she cooked memorable.

Evening set in and a blue glow bounced off the snow from the night sky leaking into the farmhouse windows. I thought it could be one of the last times my family and I sat amongst my aunt's dining room table with her. Grace sat in her wheelchair at the head of the table like always. Her favorite Christmas apron draped onto her lap even though she didn't have the strength to help prepare our meal. "Let me know if you need anything," she said as we ate.

I headed to the kitchen after gathering dishes from the table and Grace said, "I should be in there helping them." Even though she has lost the physical ability to perform the tasks that are so important to her like gardening, canning and cooking for loved ones, her will to do those things hasn't died.

Roaming through my memories at Grace's farmstead, I will never forget the vibrant colors that glowed in her pantry, reflecting a rainbow of preserves and vegetables in Kerr jars; the smell of her kitchen and her magic with plants. Above all, I will never lose the simple recollections of her teaching me the very activities she loved, like how to roll out a proper pie crust.

Already, I'm missing this woman, the emblem of the maternal side of my family. I'm mourning the loss of the things she could have told me, could have taught me. I'm mourning the moments I won't have and my connection to those before me. I'm missing the farm and the warmth of her home, the connection to my history that will inevitably be severed. The land and its keeper are slipping away from me.

Author's Note:

The author wrote this personal essay in the final months of her great aunt's life. Grace lost her battle with breast cancer in January 2009.



Kayla Matzke Newbanks is a writer residing in San Diego, Calif. where her husband serves in the Navy. She has a bachelor's in print journalism from the University of Montana.

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My Sister Lois

by Joanne Kabanuck

As I was waiting for my flight to Indianapolis in October 2011, I was thinking about the last time I'd seen my sister in August 2010 and wondering what she looked like now and how she could move around. I was asking myself how I could help her while I visited with her and her husband, Bob.

You may be wondering "why doesn't she know what her sister looks like?", but 2011 wasn't a good year for my sister. When we last saw each other, I knew she was planning to have hip surgery, but otherwise she was in excellent health.

Lois went in for hip surgery January 12, 2011, and was home several days later. She had no clue of what was to come and how her life was about to change. She started feeling like something was wrong and noticed her incision was looking infected. She saw her surgeon and he had her go directly to the hospital where she then had three more surgeries as they attempted to isolate the problem.

At first they reopened the incision to check for a cause for the problem but nothing was found. Next the doctors thought her body could be allergic to the titanium, so they removed the hip joint. Soon it became apparent there was much more going wrong, as her skin began to deteriorate. The doctors scrambled to figure out what was going on, even calling in specialists for consultations and going online to ask other doctors if they had seen anything like this before. The wound grew to about 8 inches by 17 inches in size and was very painful.

By the process of elimination, as there is no test for this condition, she was finally diagnosed with Pyoderma Gangrenosum, an autoimmune disease. They started treating it with prednisone. The skin and flesh around the incision had been eaten away by the disease, which in some cases can be triggered by a history of colitis. Lois had been diagnosed with colitis in the past. Once the spread of the disease was controlled, they did more surgery and installed a spacer in the joint.

Lois went home after becoming stabilized but started getting weaker. After a few days her primary care doctor sent



Lois and Joey in Noblesville, IN

her to a large hospital in Indianapolis, where she would have access to more specialized care. It was determined that she had developed two blood infections most likely caused by the huge open wound on her leg. Several days in ICU, where she got fantastic care, controlled the infection but contaminated the spacer. A series of seven operations, at two to three day intervals, were used to remove the spacer, the remnants of the infections and to stretch her skin to reduce the size of the open wound.

Lois had a total of eleven surgeries. She will now go through life with no hip, as the risk of any artificial joint or additional surgeries is far too great. Through this, she wondered if she would survive. Her positive attitude has inspired many people. One doctor told her that without her optimism and strong faith, she would have died. At one time, he thought he had lost her during a surgery, but she pulled through. She told me later, that she had seen our parents looking down at her, but they were smiling at her and not beckoning her to join them.

Through it all, Lois had a support network that spanned many states and she renewed friendships from all over the country. The Caring Bridge website was instrumental in keeping Lois connected with her friends and family, even people she hadn't met, who wished to send her supportive messages. Lois said those messages kept her going and gave her comfort when she was feeling down. Lois truly believes it was through prayer that she received the proper care, and was given access to the top surgeons and top infectious disease doctors.

Lois had hopes of going home by the end of May, but missed that goal by several days. She finally got to take a shower at the end of May, and she was so excited! She finally went home on June 3rd. Because they live in a two story house, her husband built her a bed in the family room, where they still sleep. She has her lift chair near the bed and her sewing table in the family room also. She is now back to sewing quilts and also does some baking and cooking. She has many exercises to do each day to keep her muscles strong and flexible.

Her shoulder joint is now deteriorated and very painful. The joint looked good in February, but by June the x-ray showed bone on bone. This was caused either by the prednisone or the blood infections. Her right knee also bothers her, but the doctors have told her that she can't have any more surgeries, as they fear the disease might flare up again. Lois goes to physical therapy each week and recently has added water therapy now that her thigh has fully healed, which she enjoys very much.

When I first saw her, I was surprised at how "normal" she looked. Her hair had always been kept brown, but now it had turned to a lovely gray with dark brown undertones. I was



Lois and Bob with her "Gathering Baskets" quilt

amazed at how she was able to get around with her walker and that she didn't seem helpless at all. Her one leg is two and a half inches shorter than the other leg, so she has gotten her shoes built up to make it easier to walk. Lois had entered 2 of her quilts in a quilt show, so the next morning we went to the show to see all of the quilts. Lois was able to walk around with her walker for over an hour!! She would run into people she knew and was always greeted with so much caring. Lois never complained or whined about what she had been through. She told me how the little things that we all take for granted, are tough when your movements are limited. She has trouble sitting down and getting up, negotiating steps, and public restrooms can't be negotiated on her own. She no longer takes simple things for granted. She has always been very independent, so she has had to learn to depend on a lot of help from others.

Lois has always been a role model to me, but I have been truly inspired by her strength of character, her strong faith, her positive attitude, bravery and determination.

Author's Note:

This year is looking much better for Lois. She will become a grandma for the first time in September and is planning to move into a new single level home later this year also.

Joanne (Joey) Kabanuck is a Registered Sales Assistant in Bismarck.

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A Beautiful Woman

by Kathleen Atkinson, OSB

Editor's Note: This was an entry in the 2011 "Who Inspires You" contest.

There was nothing magnanimous in the gesture. I was with a **COD's CHILD** service team at Panajachel, Guatemala, and we were eating breakfast when an elderly woman came to the door begging. As she walked on, I picked up my waffle and syrup packets to follow her. We sat on the curbside and ate in comfortable silence, broken by soft laughter when syrup would run down one of our hands or chin.

Though a busy morning, one man stopped long enough to simply say, "You are a beautiful woman." I translated it for my barefoot, syrup-smeared friend, giving her a smile and a gesture that said, "He told us we were beautiful women. Isn't that wonderful? And it is true, too."

I am inspired by her and still remember her months after that short meeting. I am inspired by the many beautiful women who live life valiantly. Their beauty will never make it to the front cover of a magazine; it will often come crusted with dirt and second hand clothing. It will come from an inner strength that proclaims "I will survive! Against all odds, I will survive!" This story is not about just one woman, but about the many who touched my life that year as I worked in Guatemala. These are some of the women:

Maria Juliana. I held her, bathed her and fed her at the *Casa Jackson Home for Malnourished Infants*. Rescued as a newborn from a dumpster, she was a fighter surrounded by people fighting with her. As I whispered to her of her beauty, I sent a prayer out for her mother. A woman must be devastatingly desperate to abandon a child that way.

Mother of Anita and Juan. I didn't know her name because she often did laundry when the family arrived at the



homeless shelter. She dressed her children for school in the morning. She worked during the day while they were at school, carrying the family belongings in a black garbage bag. Coming "home" every night to their mattress in a corner, she reviewed their homework with them and reminded Anita and Juan to say their meal prayer. She was a beautiful woman, fiercely believing in a better future for her children.

Marcia. I first met her in 1992 and in the decades since then, she has drawn the same heart and bird pictures, colored pencils held in her toes. A begging basket held in her wheelchair. With a smile and kind word for the people of the street - tourist or tramp, she treated all with dignity. One morning, a handwritten sign appeared on the chair where she had grown from a young teen to a woman. The sign simply read, "May 7, 2010. Marcia died." The basket now received donations to buy this beautiful woman a final resting place; her heart and body are now free to fly.

Who inspires me? I am inspired by the many beautiful women who live

life valiantly; most often for a person or purpose other than themselves. In meeting the women whose stories I have shared here, my life was changed and yet, I realized I have been blessed to meet many equally strong beautiful women here at home. They have lived here for centuries on our vast prairies: planting corn, braving blizzards, birthing and burying babies without medical care. They are living here today: I have met them in the schools, social agencies, country churches and city streets of our area.

Maria Juliana, Mother of Anita and Juan, Marcia, and the others of Guatemala simply opened my eyes. Opening my eyes often broke open my heart.

I'm frequently surprised by the broken and valiant spirit I find there, too.

Sister Kathleen Atkinson is a Benedictine Sister from the Annunciation Monastery in Bismarck, ND. She currently ministers at Charles Hall Youth Services and the ND Penitentiary.

My Mom

A positive influence

by Linda Boyd



Editor's Note: This was an entry in the 2011 "Who Inspires You" contest.

Mom is my inspiration. She encouraged me in my growing up years and she continues to be a positive influence.

In the 50's mom had several loses in her life. Her twin sister passed when they were in their late twenties, and she lost her mother and grandmother – all in a short time. Caring for Grandpa in his home was now necessary. My siblings and I were close in age (all under age 5). With all she had to take care of she continued to give positive encouragement to those around her. I can still hear her reminding us with words like, "You can do it" and "Oh, you are just as good as they are". Telling us we could be whatever we wanted to be – do whatever we wanted to do.

In my early teens Mom went to Business College and then started working at The Minot Daily News, where she worked for 25 years. As busy as she was, she made sure my siblings and I attended Sunday school, church and church choir and practiced for our baton and guitar lessons. She taught Sunday school and volunteered as a scout leader. Mom knitted mittens for the neighbor kids and was known for her popcorn balls, especially around the holidays. She always encouraged us to get a college education. I had a happy childhood. Mom saw to that.

Following the death of dad in the early 1990's, Mom moved to Bismarck, to be close to us – her children and grandchildren. Family has been her priority, so moving close to us was a natural choice for her. Immediately she began to volunteer with The ARC and got involved with quilting at church, but more importantly she again became a part of our everyday lives by helping us with our families.

Today with some health issues, she carries on with dignity and a "can do" attitude. She enjoys lunch with friends and telephone visits with her out of town sisters and plays bingo. At home she always has a jigsaw puzzle to complete, computer games to play and afghans to crochet. A passion of hers is ice-skating (as a spectator these days). Together we enjoy the Bismarck/Mandan Newcomers meeting each month, the

Bismarck-Mandan Symphony programs, local ballet productions, movies, lunch around town and attending church.

As I drop her off at her front door, I watch as she lugs a heavy bag and maybe some bargains she found at the mall. "Can I help you get those things?" I ask.

"No, I will take my time and get there," she replies.

Throughout my lifetime she has demonstrated that even though circumstances will sometimes get in our way, we need to continue to move forward and never, ever give up. Our attitude and faith will get us through the tough times.

I have been blessed and am thankful for my mom, Meredith Pratt, who continues to inspire me.

Linda Boyd is a substitute teacher after retiring from Mandan Public Schools. She and husband Jim have two wonderful boys, Jeff and Brandon.

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Who Inspires You?



Our mom – **Janice Pierce**.
Submitted by Deana Mack



My mother, **Rose Mickelson**. Even with many health issues and struggles in life, she was never one to complain or feel sorry for herself. My mom was selfless and had great faith in God. I have tried to follow in her footsteps in raising my family of 10 children. Although she passed away in 1970, she still inspires me every day.

*Submitted by
JoAnn Axt*



My beautiful mom,
Alicia Krein of Hebron, ND.

The amount of giving that this woman does for her family is amazing. I love her more than she could ever possibly know.

Submitted by Meghan Azorlie



My friend **Mary Vinje-Shenk** is my inspiration. She is such a great person. I always say, everyone in the world should have the privilege of knowing Mary. She is the most generous, thoughtful person I know. She makes you want to be a better person by just seeing her actions and kindness she shows to others. She is one of my most precious things that I have in my life. Whenever we are together we just have a blast, the time isn't long enough.

Submitted by Sue Hammer-Schneider

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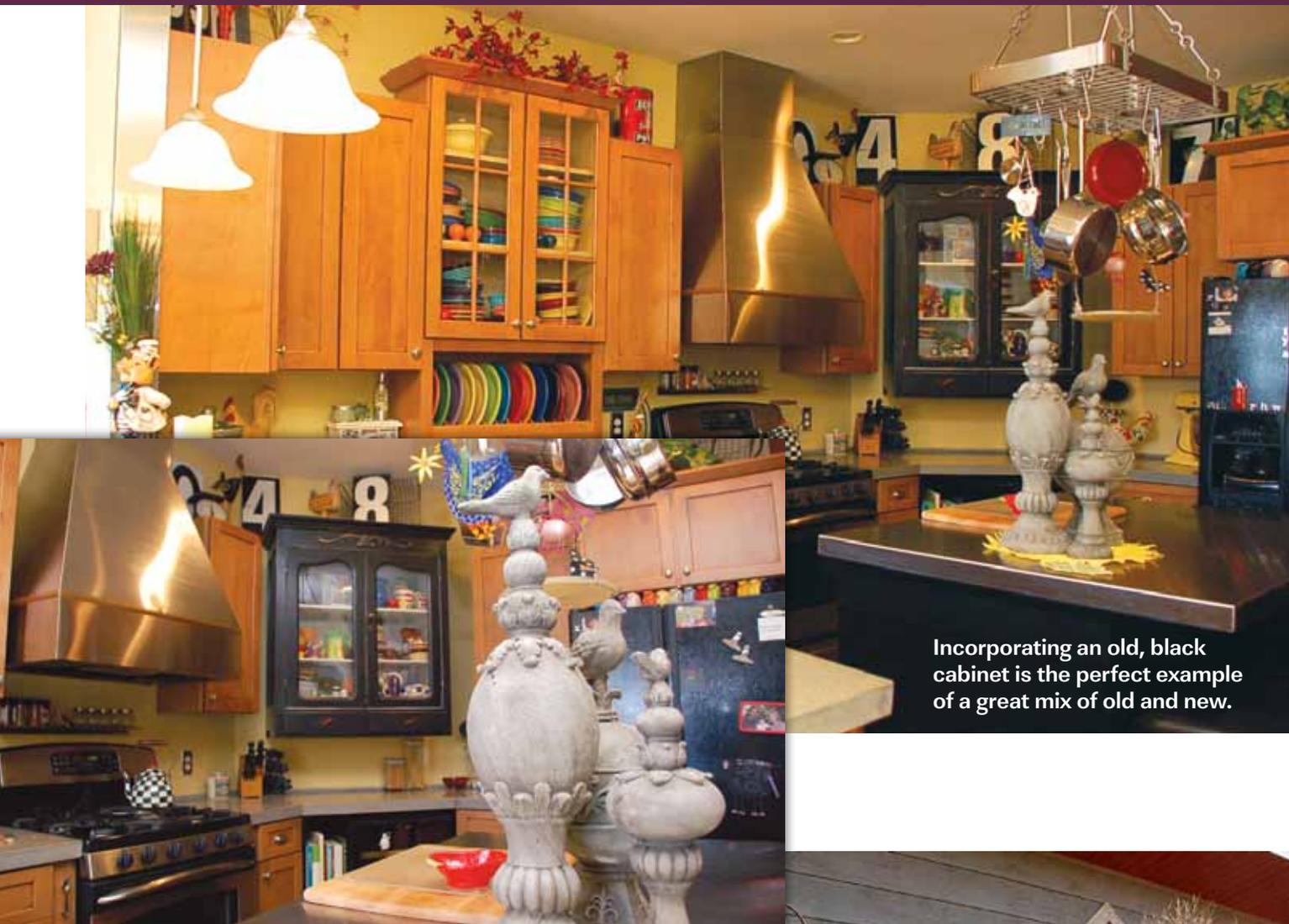


Rhonda Jolliffe, Nurse Practitioner with Lifeways Partners in Health presents a check to first place winner Cheryl McCormack



Brenna Gerhardt, Executive Director of the North Dakota Humanities Council presents a check to Cheryl

It's The Mix, Not The Match



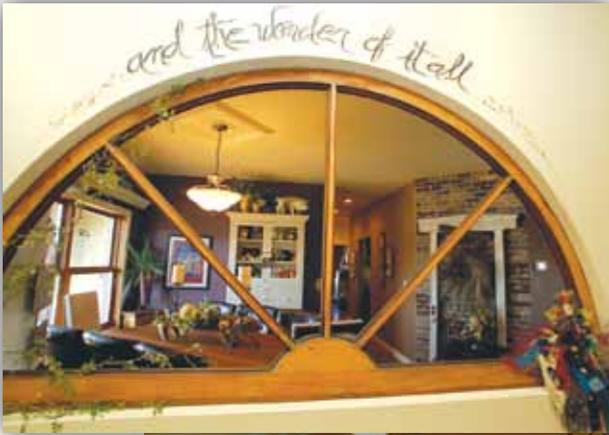
Incorporating an old, black cabinet is the perfect example of a great mix of old and new.

Homeowner Ann Andre knows how to mix. She mixes colors, textures, old and new...and it works.

Andre, who also owns Junk Yard Chic, invited us into her home to show us she is all about the mix, not the match.



You've read about it - you can stack old suitcases, and they look pretty cool! Ann has balanced an old wooden saddle on top. The new, striped vase mixes fabulously with the old column and black trunk. (an actual car trunk with legs added)



The eggplant walls are a dramatic backdrop to this dining table made of old pine from a staircase. And yes, that is an actual antique window, incorporated to open up the space and add some wonder.



A Slice of Inspiration

Mother and Daughter Artists

Francie Heinle and Jenna Jacobson recently participated in the Pride of Dakota show at the State Capitol building. Many tables full of handmade wares, baked goods and more lined the hallway. Heinle and Jacobson's table held pottery and paintings, inviting passersby to stop and enjoy the colors, textures and talents displayed there.

Jacobson, an art teacher at Century, currently prefers to paint landscapes, figures and portraits. "I am more into abstract, being more expressive," she explained.

Acrylic and oil pastels are her mediums of choice and the aspen paintings displayed at their booth were gorgeous. You can view Jenna's work at jennajacobsonstudio.com.

Heinle's pottery included some raku, fire pit and horsehair pieces. Yes, horsehair. "I was invited to do a show in Medora and wanted to incorporate that into my work," she explained. The horsehair creates interesting lines in the pottery, and every piece is distinctive.

"I just expanded my studio, so it is going to be a fun year," said Francie. She is starting to experiment with fiber art and mixed media, combining metal with pottery and art quilts. She even admitted to drawing some inspiration from Pinterest but ultimately, God and His wonderful creations are behind it all.

Look for their work at the Garden Expo April 14th at the Civic Center.



Artists Francie Heinle and Jenna Jacobson at the Pride of Dakota show.



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Adding Next Chapter to Bismarck Library

by Gayle Schuck

Like a new character introduced in a book, Kristi Harms stepped into the story of Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library when she became Library Director in June 2011. She is writing a new chapter for an iconic Bismarck institution that hosts over 1,000 visitors a day.

"I was amazed at the number of resources, programs and services available at the Library," said Harms. In all, the Bismarck Public Library has 189,000 books and other resources. Programming includes Story Hour, which draws 15,000 preschoolers annually. Classes offered to the public on many topics, public meeting rooms and the Bookmobile are among the services offered.

"The city of Bismarck is aware of the significant role of the Library and supports it," said Harms. Still, tax funding only goes so far. Harms values the help provided by two nonprofits created to raise private support for the Library. The Library Foundation, Inc. and the Friends of the Library have their own stories to tell.

The Friends recent used book sale was the organization's most successful spring sale, raising \$19,500. The Friends host the sales each March and October. The money has helped fund dozens of immediate needs, from a defibrillator to computers to shelving. Each summer they host an ice cream social to wrap up the children's Summer Reading Program.

The story of The Library Foundation, Inc. began in 1975, with a mission to assist with larger projects and raise funds to invest for future use. The Foundation wrote a new chapter in the

history of the Library when it spearheaded the Children's Library project. The space opened in late 2009.

Harms is looking forward to the Foundation's annual event, Coffee, Chocolate & Collectibles, a fundraiser featuring an auction conducted by North Star Auction set for April 13.

Each of the 46 auction items has a story—some with history and some with mystery. A number of pieces are unique to Bismarck, such as a wooden puzzle made by prisoners at Fort Lincoln during World War II. North Dakota artwork includes a 1960s-era Gary Miller painting of an oil work-over rig and UND Pottery. Czech folk art marionettes are part of the international items. Collectors may be enticed by everything from Beatrix Potter figurines to belt buckles.

Rare books will highlight the auction, including a signed William Faulkner first edition.

"The Foundation's spring event is going to be just fabulous," said Harms. "I'm so pleased, because they're raising funds for Teen Services and that is a priority for the library." The Young Adult area of the library is relatively small. The money raised will help create a space for teens where they can work, read and socialize in an area that is specific to their needs.

Harms grew up in Minnesota. Her path to a career as a librarian is a story in itself. In 1993, her family moved to a Naval Air Station on the island of Adak in the Aleutian Islands. The library was closed because there was no funding for a librarian. Harms volunteered to open the library, with the help of

Coffee, Chocolate & Collectibles Antique & Unique Auction

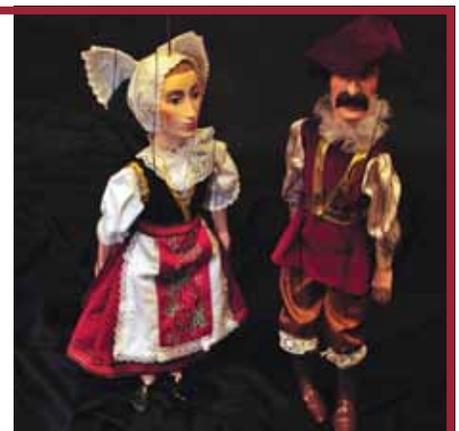
Friday, April 13, 2012

Doors open: 6:30 p.m.
Preview: 6:30-7:30 p.m.
Silent Auction: 6:30-8:00 p.m.
Live Auction: 7:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$10 at the door.
To attend, RSVP by calling 701-355-1502 by April 10.

To see the auction items, check out the Library's front display area.

Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library
515 N. 5th Street, Bismarck





Kristi Harms holds a William Faulkner first-edition book that will be auctioned April 13.

some other dedicated individuals. They managed to keep the library open, plus provide Story Hour for children and deliver books to the ships that docked in Adak. While there, Harms worked on an associate's degree from the University of Alaska-Anchorage. Classes offered often depended upon who was stationed in Adak, so she took an interesting mix of classes including Private Pilot Ground School, Astronomy, and Biota of Alaska, in which she helped dissect a bald eagle and a sea otter.

Harms was a stay-at-home mom until her children were in grade school.

After the family moved to Indiana, she applied for a job at the local public library. She started working part-time, providing library programs to all age groups, including Book Babies and a virtual travel program for seniors. Eventually, she went back to college and finished her bachelor's degree at the University of Maine at Augusta, graduating magna cum laude, through their distance education program.

"I worked full-time by this point, and was raising a family, so I thought that college was beyond my grasp. Fortunately, the distance education system had evolved enough to make

this possible." Harms believes that anyone can return to college, at any age. "It's important for people to know that there are so many alternatives to the traditional college student experience." Harms took over as the director of the library where she worked, and continued her education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She has a bachelor's degree in Library and Information Technology and a Master's degree in Library and Information Science.

These days, thoughts of Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library are never far from Harms' mind. "The next chapter in Library services will include moving toward more e-resources. We now have books that patrons can download from home to most electronic readers. But for those who enjoy holding a book in their hands, we will continue to build our print collection. The library is committed to providing equal access to all patrons regardless of economic status."

In her spare time, Harms volunteers, bakes, and of course, she reads. She has a daughter Cody, who is living with her in Bismarck, and a son Zachary who lives in Indiana. Both of her children are attending grad school this year. Harms also has a Maine Coon cat named Marit that she adopted from the Central Dakota Humane Society.

Gayle Schuck is the development director for The Library Foundation, Inc.

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Arthritis: More than just joint pain

by Kylie Blanchard



Dr. Lynne Peterson with some volunteers at Arthritis Walk

It's a condition that affects individuals of all ages, including children, and occurs in both males and females. Although "arthritis" is a general term used to describe joint pain, there are approximately 70 million adults nationwide that suffer from some form of this condition.

"Typically, we divide joint symptoms into two main categories, those conditions that are degenerative or 'wear-and-tear' related, and those conditions that are inflammatory," says Dr. Lynne Peterson, rheumatologist at Medcenter One.

Dr. Peterson completed her Rheumatology Fellowship at Mayo Clinic in 1996 and began practicing at Medcenter One the same year. She has taken part in national clinical arthritis research projects for the past 15 years and has also been named Clinical Researcher of the Year for the Rheumatoid Arthritis Investigational Network on multiple occasions.

"The symptoms of arthritis vary according to the type of joint condition," she says. "The most common symptoms include joint pain, stiffness, swelling, difficulty moving a joint or

redness of a joint. Children often present with a limp or refusal to walk."

According to the national Arthritis Foundation, the most common types of arthritis include osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and juvenile arthritis. Osteoarthritis, also called degenerative joint disease, is the most common, affecting 27 million people nationwide. It is a chronic condition characterized by the breakdown of the joint's cartilage. Rheumatoid arthritis is also a chronic disease, characterized by the inflammation of the lining of the joints and can lead to long-term joint damage, chronic pain, loss of function and disability. Juvenile arthritis refers to any form of arthritis or arthritis-related condition that develops in children under 16 years of age. It affects nearly 300,000 children in the United States.

Dr. Peterson says significant strides have been made in the treatment options for arthritis patients, especially those with rheumatoid arthritis. "Multiple medications are available for rheumatoid arthritis, including anti-inflammatory agents, steroids, disease modifying agents, and the newer biologic agents. Osteoarthritis, or degenerative arthritis, is typically treated with physical therapy, pain control, splints, steroid injections, and surgery. Unfortunately, we do not have a drug to reverse osteoarthritis."

She notes there are measures individuals can take to help prevent arthritis, including exercise, smoking cessation, prevention of injuries and weight loss.

Anne West was first diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis in 1996. "I was down in Texas for the winter and got

very sick with a lot of pain," she says of her first experience with the symptoms of the disease. "I was one of Dr. Peterson's first patients in Bismarck. I knew she was trained at Mayo and I was waiting to see her when she got set up here."

West has worked with Dr. Peterson to control the symptoms of her rheumatoid arthritis primarily with medication, but she has had both her knees replaced and surgery on both hands as a result of the condition. "I exercise an hour a day on a recumbent bike and I know that also helps," West adds.

As a professional artist, she says the condition has not slowed her ability to create works of art and instruct individuals on the craft of painting. "I think people expect you to be crippled and I am not," she says.

Many misconceptions exist today related to arthritis, notes Dr. Peterson. "Often people think arthritis is just aches and pains, and little can be done to alleviate the pain and disability of arthritis," she notes. "But significant advances in treatment have occurred in

the past few years, especially for inflammatory arthritis. It is important to seek medical attention early to avoid delay in diagnosis and to potentially start treatment before joint damage occurs."

West also encourages those experiencing the symptoms of arthritis to seek medical attention. "That is what is going to help," she says. "If an individual thinks they have arthritis, I would highly recommend Dr. Peterson. She is a great doctor."

Both West and Dr. Peterson say raising awareness of arthritis is an important step to the continued research and treatment of its conditions. The Arthritis Walk is held each spring across the nation to help raise awareness of the disease. The event brings together community members to promote movement and raise funds for arthritis research, education and life improvement programs.

This year's Bismarck-Mandan Arthritis Walk will take place on Saturday, May 5 at the Medcenter One Women's Health Center. Registration begins at 9 a.m. and the walk begins

at 10 a.m. "The event is a fun-filled morning which includes a health fair, kid's zone, warm-up exercises, one- or three-mile walk and door prizes," says Dr. Peterson.

"Arthritis is a common and often, debilitating disorder," she continues. "It is important to have ongoing joint problems evaluated to assess the type of arthritis and treatment recommendations. Although we do not have a cure for arthritis, the treatment options may put the arthritis into remission so that joint damage does not occur."

Additional information on arthritis, along with a variety of resources for arthritis patients and their families, is available on The Arthritis Foundation website at www.arthritis.org.



Kylie Blanchard is a local writer.



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 Recipes from Annual Christmas Tea
 Candy and Cookies
 1966

Cherry Almond Drops
 1 c. brown sugar 1 t. salt
 1 c. gran. sugar 1 t. soda
 1 c. shortening 1/2 c. cut-up cherries
 2 eggs 1/2 c. coconut
 3 1/2 c. flour 1/4 t. almond extract
 Cream together sugars, shortening and eggs. Sift together flour, salt and soda and add to creamed mixture. Mix well. Add cherries, coconut and extract. Drop by teaspoon onto greased baking sheet. Bake: 350° - 15-18 min. 6 - 7 doz.

Cinnamon Crinkles
 2 c. sifted flour 1 egg
 1 t. baking powder 2 t. vanilla
 1/4 t. baking soda 1/4 c. evap. milk
 1 1/4 c. sugar 1/4 c. gran. sugar
 3/4 c. shortening 1 t. cinnamon
 1 t. salt
 Sift together flour, baking powder, b. soda and 1/2 t. cinnamon. Cream together sugar, shortening and salt until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Beat in milk. Add flour mixture and blend until dough is thoroughly mixed. Chill dough. Shape into 1-inch balls. Combine 1/4 c. sugar and 1 t. cinnamon. Roll balls in mixture. Place on ungreased baking sheet about 2 inches apart. Bake 350° 12 - 13 min. 6 doz cookies.

Green Wreaths
 1/4 lb. butter green food color.
 30 lg. marshmallows Red hot candies
 1 t. vanilla 3 1/2 c. corn flakes
 Combine marshmallows and butter in double boiler until melted. Add vanilla and green coloring. Stir in corn flakes. Drop on waxed paper and with buttered fingers make a hole in center. Sprinkle with red candies. Let dry overnight.

Pepper Cookies (Pfefferkuchen)
 1 c. sugar 1/2 t. baking powder
 3/4 c. honey 1/4 t. baking soda
 1/4 c. butter
 2 eggs
 2 T. strong coffee
 3 1/2 or more c. flour 1/4
 Boil together sugar, honey, coffee and rest of ingredients. Make stiff dough. Roll out on greased paper. Sprinkle with coarse sugar. Bake 15 min.

Norwegian Butter Cookies
 1 c. soft butter 3/4 c. walnuts
 1/2 c. pwd. sugar 2 t. vanilla.
 2 c. sifted flour
 Cream butter & sugar till smooth. Add vanilla & nuts, then flour. Roll into 1 1/2 inch balls. Flatten slightly with fork. Place on ungreased baking sheet. Bake 325° 10 min.

Jam Cake
 Linda Black brought this recipe, saying that in Kentucky it is made each year at Christmas.)
 Mix following ingredients together
 5 eggs 2 t. allspice
 1 c. butter 2 t. cloves.
 3 1/2 c. flour
 1 t. vanilla
 2 t. cinnamon
 Mix the following together:
 2 c. sugar 1 c. nuts
 1 c. buttermilk 1 c. raisins
 2 c. jam. (any kind) 1 t. vanilla
 Mix the two groups of ingredients together. Bake in a tube pan - as an angel food cake - for 2 hrs.



Remember Home Ec?

by Pam Vukelic

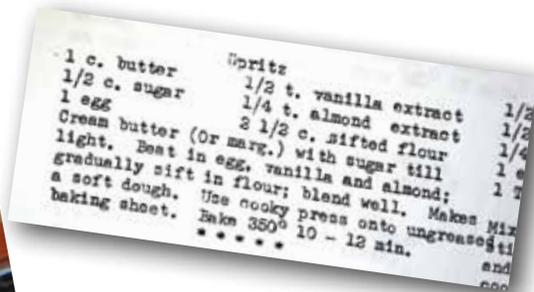
"I'll be jiggered!" was the expression Lois Watts used when I explained to her the sophisticated computerized "babies" we use to simulate the experience of parenting a newborn in high school Parenting classes these days. The babies cry and coo, and demand various care-giving responses, all of which are recorded, and can be printed out to evaluate the effectiveness of the parent. Yes, things are remarkably different than they were when Lois started teaching Home Economics in the early 1940's.

Lois and her now deceased husband, Bob Watts, have made a large monetary gift to the Bismarck Public Schools. Bob's avocation and vocation was aviation. Lois taught Home Economics for many years at Bismarck High School after her first year of teaching in Beach, and closed out her teaching career at Century when it was a brand new school. Their gifts are intended to augment the learning experiences of the students who take the classes Lois used to teach and those who are pursuing the career that Bob loved.

Although many of Lois's recollections have faded with time, there seem to be two experiences from her teaching days that stand out. She remembers having four and five year old children come to the high



Lois Watts photo from BHS yearbook



school to have a playschool experience. Students in Child Development classes planned lessons and activities for the children. She recalls playing Ring Around the Rosie and reading children's books like "The Little Engine that Could." She also remembers how one youngster got fed up with the activities and decided he was going to just go home. Lois followed him to keep an eye on him and was relieved to find he lived just across the street from the school grounds.

During the holiday season Lois guided the Home Economics students in putting on an Annual Christmas Tea for faculty and spouses. This was a huge production and preparations were monumental. Thanks to Lynne Bigwood, a friend and companion to Lois, we were able to unearth a typed copy of all the recipes prepared for the tea held in 1966. There are four pages of legal-size paper chock-full of 32 different candy and cookie recipes. Notwithstanding the work of preparing all these goodies, imagine the effort involved in preparing the recipe handouts. Those of us old enough to recognize the format can appreciate what it took. My mom was the advisor for our high school newspaper and I recall how she typed a stencil and used blue correction fluid to correct her mistakes. Once that was completed, with lots of counting of spaces to center the titles, the stencil was attached to a machine with a drum and she cranked the handle to run each individual page through. Do we appreciate all the cut and paste capabilities of our word processing programs as much as we should? And this machine had no collating and stapling capabilities either!

Many of the recipes are familiar, and perhaps are still holiday favorites in your household. They include Green Wreaths made with corn flakes and melted marshmallows, Pfefferneuse, Spritz, and Melting Moments. And some seem to be more like a blast from the past – Jam Cake, Norwegian Butter Cookies, and Quick Walnut Panocha.

This must have been a much-anticipated event at the high school. It's one that has gone by the wayside. However, students still invite small children to attend playschool. And they still read "The Little Engine that Could" and play Ring Around the Rosie.

Lois and Bob never had children of their own, but Lois holds a special place in the heart of many former students, friends, and neighbors. Her kindness and generosity were apparent through the years in simple acts, and now through their significant gift to this generation's children.



Pam Vukelic is a food and nutrition instructor with Bismarck High School.

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Lisa's Gluten Free & More

by Tina Ding

After receiving a flu shot, Lisa Helseth's heart began racing. She reached out for medical help. However, following numerous doctor appointments and emergency room visits, her health continued to decline. She sought medical treatment for a host of symptoms including her unexplained weight loss. Eventually Helseth turned to Mayo Clinic where she was diagnosed with celiac disease.

Helseth learned the villa in her small intestine had become damaged by the disease – preventing her body from absorbing nutrients into her bloodstream. She researched and discovered she'd need to completely eliminate gluten (the protein found in wheat, barley and rye) from her diet, since celiac disease can lead to a number of other disorders, including cancers, autoimmune diseases and anemia.

Armed with knowledge and prepared to adopt a new gluten-free diet, she

shopped local grocery aisles for both foods and products without gluten. Discouraged and frustrated, she read label after label – discovering the harsh realities of her disease. Nearly everything she picked up held gluten in the form of one wheat product or another. From shampoos and toothpastes to obvious breads, pastas and processed foods, her shopping cart stayed empty. Five hour trips to grocery stores were cumbersome and depressing.

Unrealistic preparation of two different menus at each meal added to her burden. Even the smallest particles of gluten can cause health problems to those with gluten intolerance/sensitivity or with celiac, contributing to bowel damage and creating an immune-mediated toxic reaction. Cross-contamination while preparing foods posed a serious risk; her home became gluten-free and her husband Jay joined her new nutritional plan.

Still, they struggled with purchasing foods locally. They journeyed to Minnesota frequently to purchase safe foods for her and found they shared a deep desire to help make a difference not only in their household, but into the Bismarck-Mandan community of gluten-intolerant individuals, those with gluten-sensitivity and those diagnosed with celiac disease. They knew the difficulties of seeking gluten-free products and now recognized the severity of a diagnosis without treatment.

"Learning I had celiac disease gave me hope. I finally knew what was wrong with my body," Helseth said. "Yet there were few options for us locally. We knew the ultimate option for us was to establish a gluten-free store."

When both her son and sister were diagnosed, she moved on her decision to make life simpler. She and Jay began seriously hunting for a store front so they might bring



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these products to our area – under one roof.

They considered locations in both Bismarck and Mandan before selecting a location with ample parking and windows. Located at 211 E Main Street in Mandan, Lisa's Gluten Free & More shelves are stocked with gluten-free foods and products as well as dairy- and peanut-free foods. Shoppers no longer need to scrutinize labels. Every item at Lisa's holds no gluten.

"We knew it was larger than the two of us when our son became diagnosed. I was no longer alone in this journey and began to fully understand the dynamic of this being an inherited disease," Helseth explained. "Our grandchild also holds the gene."

Gluten exists in all forms of wheat, inclusive of durum, spelt, rye, barley, semolina and more. According to the National Foundation for Celiac Awareness, celiac disease affects one out of 133 Americans. When consuming gluten, ingested protein interferes with the absorption of nutrients. A genetic disorder, the diagnosis can be tricky. Symptomatic individuals may approach their physician to request information and may undergo blood work or a biopsy to determine celiac disease or to learn of gluten intolerance and gluten sensitivity.

"Recovery from this lifelong disease means never eating gluten again," Jay Helseth said. "We chose to invest in a store; we are the only gluten-free store

Texas Sheet Cake

Mix together:

2 Cups Sugar
2 Cups Gluten Free All Purpose Flour
½ tsp. Salt
Set aside

In sauce pan

½ Cup Margarine
½ Cup Crisco
4 tbsp. Cocoa
1 Cup Water

Bring to boil. Pour mixture over flour and sugar. Beat well. Add ½ cup buttermilk, 2 slightly beaten eggs, 1 tsp. gluten free baking soda, and 1 tsp. gluten free vanilla beat well. Pour into a greased and gluten free floured 11x16 jelly roll pan. Bake at 375 for 20 minutes.

Frosting

1 1/2 cups Sugar
6 tbsp. Milk
6 tbsp. Margarine

Bring to boil. Hard boil for 2 minutes stirring constantly. Remove from heat; add ¾ cup chocolate chips and 1 tsp. gluten free vanilla. Mix until smooth. Pour frosting over cake right away.

in North Dakota. Our goals are first to be a resource to friends and family with this disease, and secondly, we strive to make gluten-free products available in our area, our community."

While recovering, Lisa has grown intolerant of both dairy and corn. She now finds herself more appreciative of other food allergies or intolerances. She tucks away ideas, recipes and tips from various customers – with every intention of sharing them. "Play-doh and licorice contain gluten," she said. "Who knew?"

Lisa's Gluten-Free & More holds replacement products for everyday all-purpose flour so baking and cooking is possible. Multiple pasta brands, flours and condiments as well as some chips or crackers fill the shelves. Baking ingredients such as yeast, baking soda and baking powder can contain gluten. Her stock items do not.

"Opening this business has been so rewarding to me," Helseth said. "Seeing repeat customers and knowing they are now able to eat healthier and overcome this disease has been very fulfilling. It's developed into a family business. And we like that. We wouldn't have it any other way."



Tina Ding, local freelance writer, is also a wife and mother of three.

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Dining with Diabetes

Dining with Diabetes North Dakota Style is a research-based education program teaching individuals with diabetes and their families better ways to manage their disease through meal planning, healthy food choices, increasing physical activity, medications and working with a medical team. The goal for the project is to improve diabetes self-management by providing tools and skills that enable individuals living with diabetes, and those at risk of the disease, to make more healthful food choices and increase physical activity.

Dining with Diabetes participants attend four weekly 3½ hour sessions. During these four weeks, attendees learn important topics related to diabetes self-management including: making healthy food choices, portion control, meal planning (based on the Plate Method), healthy food preparation strategies, sugar and sugar substitutes, salt reduction, how to read food labels,

how to engage in regular physical activity and medications. Each session includes a tasting of various recipes that are healthy versions of familiar favorites. This four week program is offered to the public in the spring and fall of each year, with locations rotating between Bismarck and Mandan.

Dining with Diabetes sessions are taught by a combination of health professionals including Registered Dietitians, Extension Agents, and a Registered Nurse. In addition, UND Medical School Residents attend one of the four sessions to address participant's questions regarding medications, emerging therapies and lab values.

In the Bismarck-Mandan community, a coalition works together to offer Dining with Diabetes North Dakota Style. Partners include: NDSU Extension Service Burleigh and Morton County, UND Center for Family Medicine and Custer Health.

Dining with Diabetes North Dakota Style

Bismarck

April 12, 19, 26 & May 3

9:00 - 11:30 am

Edgewood Village

3124 N. Colorado Dr.

Mandan

April 12, 19, 25 & May 3

5:30 - 7:30 pm

Morton County Courthouse

210 2nd Avenue NW

Cost – \$25

Attendance is limited.

Register soon!

For more information contact

Burleigh County Extension

221-6865

Morton County Extension

667-3340

A Dining With Diabetes Experience

"Nancy, you and your mom need to go to Dining with Diabetes," Brenda called out one day at work. A few days later I was with my mom for her doctor's appointment and Brenda tells Mom, "Jane, you really should go to Dining with Diabetes." Mom and I laughed. Later that afternoon we decided to sign up; it was only for a month and met for two hours on Tuesdays.

I also asked my friend Judy, who was recently diagnosed with diabetes, if she wanted to join us. So the three of us – Jane, a 30-year veteran of diabetes; Nancy, diagnosed about six years ago, and Judy, diagnosed less than six months ago – went to our first class. We came thinking we would at least get a review and anything more was a bonus.

From the very start, it was more than we expected. Each session we got to try out some new dishes and learned a new strategy for living well with diabetes.

A favorite for all of us was keeping chopped up fresh veggies in the fridge with some Italian dressing. It was yummy, colorful and customized for each of our tastes. It made a great diabetic-friendly snack and/or side dish. Judy suggested adding a touch of olive oil, which made it even better. One of my favorite tips was for getting a bit more exercise during trips to the grocery store: walk around the perimeter of the store and up and down each aisle before starting to shop. This is great for those cold, blustery days when you cannot be outside or if you just want to get some extra walking.

Since the class, we all three feel more empowered to live well with our diabetes. Each of us have even better control of our diabetes and have lost some weight. Dining with Diabetes is a wonderful opportunity for anyone living with diabetes.



*"No one can take the place
of a friend, no one."
- Maya Angelou*

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Bringing Change to Africa

by Dayna Del Val



Deb smiling with some of her new “daughters.”

Three years ago, Julie Costello, a teacher at Carl Ben Eielson Middle School in Fargo, met Joseph Akol Makeer, a former “Lost Boy of Sudan.” School had been delayed because of snow, but Joseph hadn’t heard the announcement and had shown up to speak to a group of students. He and Julie began talking, and an idea was born.

Joseph told Julie that girls in Sudan stopped going to school when they reached puberty because they didn’t have any feminine hygiene products or underwear. Julie recalls, “We can get so worked up at times about little

things, and here was something really worth getting our panties in a bunch about.”

That spring, the first annual “Get Your Panties in a Bunch” lunch was held in Fargo. Along with Julie, Deb Dawson, president of the board African Soul, American Heart, helped plan the event because all proceeds would go to support the girls from Duk Payuel, South Sudan, Joseph’s home village.

African Soul, American Heart is a Fargo non-profit dedicated to raising funds to build an orphanage and school for girls in Duk Payuel.

The first event was a massive success with a mountain of pastel panties sitting in the front of the ballroom as guests listened to various speakers share their experiences of being from Africa or having visiting Southern Sudan.

The third annual event was recently held, and again, people, mostly women, gathered to hear speakers, bring panties, eat lunch, and learn more about the important work that African Soul, American Heart is doing in Southern Sudan to ensure that girls are getting to continue their education.

Gathering the panties, however, is just the beginning of the journey. Once they are packed in 50-pound bags, United Airlines generously donates their extra baggage fee so they can be flown from Fargo to Minneapolis to Amsterdam, and then on to Nairobi. A flight is then chartered from Nairobi to Duk Payuel. The panties travel when Deb does, which is with frequent regularity these days, as she is overseeing the building of the orphanage compound and advancement of the 11 orphan girls who are the first to receive an education at the school.

Once in the remote village, girls get in line to receive their panties and reusable freedom pads. The anticipation is evident as each girl waits her turn. Deb, who is currently in Duk Payuel

Dodgeball is the great universal game!



continuing the organization's work, says, "When we began bringing underwear and washable sanitary napkins, the girls responded with tremendous excitement. Not only did these supplies mean they would be able to attend school, it also enhanced their feeling of dignity. They have been enduring the monthly humiliation of remaining homebound for a week, and facing ridicule by boys. They couldn't believe that their 'mothers in America' who didn't even know them would care enough to help them. About 75 girls reenrolled in school the first year we brought panties to Duk Payuel. We are now sharing the supplies with Pateunoi [a neighboring village], and hope, eventually, to bring these supplies to more far-reaching villages."

The results of girls getting to stay in school are far reaching and have the potential to change the direction of this very young country. Deb continues, "African Soul, American Heart's primary mission is to educate 50 girls through primary, secondary school and beyond, so that they will have mar-

ketable skills and knowledge that will enable them to support themselves, their families, and to become leaders in the development of their new nation, which badly needs educated women. Literacy rate for women in South Sudan is about 1%."

Forced marriage at puberty contributes to the oppression of women and young girls. Girls who drop out of school because they don't have underwear and hygiene supplies are simply another mouth to feed, or an unpaid worker within the household. To raise the household status and income level, these girls are married off in exchange for cattle dowry at 14, 15, 16 years old.

These early marriages contribute to the rate of death in childbirth – one in ten young women die in childbirth. Women who complete their basic education (even primary school), marry later and have fewer and healthier children. Women who have marketable skills are able to contribute to their family's support, which is doubly important in an environment when early death due to war, inter-tribal

fighting, disease, infection, and encounters with snakes and scorpions and such lead to a high number of widows supporting their families.

As Julie often says, "One person can't solve everything, but when I heard about these girls, I thought, 'I can do something about this.'" Julie's idea caught on in the Fargo-Moorhead community and has moved to several other cities and organizations, including Bismarck. Young girls are receiving opportunities that were not available to them just a few years ago all because of a snowstorm, a conversation, a passionate teacher, and an organization dedicated to the hard and joyful work of ensuring education remains a possibility for all.

A "Get Your Panties in a Bunch Lunch" will be held Saturday, April 21st at the Ramkota.

For tickets and more information, visit africansoulamericanheart.org/pantieslunch.

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Ann*

30% of the proceeds from the sale of Sandi's Heart goes to the Sandi Blair fund.

Sandi's Heart was designed by Ann Andre and is available exclusively at Junk Yard Chic.



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As COO, Murray will direct the Project's Bismarck-based and multi-national business operations, financial structures, and development strategies.



He joins the Project with vast public and private sector experience. He has been Assistant Attorney General, State Health Officer, and currently is a Brigadier General in the Army National Guard where in 2011 he was appointed by Governor Jack Dalrymple to coordinate statewide flood recovery efforts.

This is an exciting time for The GOD'S CHILD Project, and we are glad to have Murray join us.

Thank you for your support of The GOD'S CHILD Project children, and please continue to be generous to them with your love, prayers, and support, here at home and around the world.

Patrick Atkinson
Founder, Executive Director



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