

Inspired Woman

BLESSINGS



DOUBLY BLESSED BY TWINS
ONE MIRACLE, ONE ANGEL

SO MANY BLESSINGS:
ORGANIZE THEM ALL IN 2017

POSITIVELY BLESSED
IN SWEET SUFFERING

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

Our Philosophy

Our philosophy reflects our core beliefs and values. It reveals what we believe and value most about people and organizations, as well as the kind of organization we are and desire to be.

We believe every woman is created in God's image, with value and with purpose. We believe women should be celebrated and valued for their uniqueness, talent, and beauty. We believe women should be honored for the contributions they make to their families, careers, and communities.

We value the vast differences, backgrounds, and beliefs that make each woman special, and the possibility that these can unite us rather than divide us.

We aspire to breathe life into those who read and hear the stories we share.

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to enrich the lives we touch, to share inspiring stories, and to educate our readers, as well as ourselves. Inspired Woman is a journey—we are inspired every day, and we grow and learn with each issue we produce. We feel called to use our talents and time to inspire others.

Our Objective

Our objective is to provide a print magazine and an interactive website where women can go to read about other women doing great things, to find hope, inspiration, laughter, and maybe even a new recipe. We strive to enrich every life we touch through Inspired Woman.

**"She believed she could,
so she did."**

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**"Do not forget a single blessing."
Psalm 103:2**



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Editors' Notes



I am not musically talented. I can't keep a beat, I don't sing, and I don't play any instruments (I did try as a kid, but that's a story for another time.) Yet, despite my lack of musical ability, music does have an important part in my life, for starters, I am a much more productive worker when there's music playing. I've got different playlists for different moods, but one of my favorites includes the song "Blessings" by Laura Story. The lyrics are a good reminder for me, and often the nudge I need to stop feeling sorry for myself.

We pray for blessings

We pray for peace....

'Cause what if Your blessings come through raindrops

What if Your healing comes through tears

What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near

What if trials of this life are Your mercies in disguise

This issue is full of stories about blessings, trials, and people who will inspire you. I can't wait for you to read every story! I am especially excited about our cover girl, Tana Johnson inspires me to be a better person. What she is doing for her community is truly a blessing. I can't stop thinking about how I can help with her project, Angel 37 Kitchen.

But it's not just Tana. All of the stories in this issue spoke to me and made me stop and count my blessings, even those that come through raindrops.

I hope the magazine does the same for you.

Jody



"The secret to having it all is believing you already do."

I don't know who spoke those words originally, but this sentiment contains wisdom that I appreciate more with each passing year. The word "blessings" is one I like to share often with others and think about daily. What I count as blessings are simple. My wish list is short.

When Jody and I started planning this issue we thought it would be all about finances; how to get your money matters tidied up in the New Year, and plan for wealth management. But then we landed on the idea of blessings—because isn't what we have so much more than what is in the bank?

The people you will meet in this issue share their blessings with others in many ways: through pain, heartbreak, laughter, generosity, and sacrifice.

They are stories that remind us to think again about our own blessings, and stop complaining for a while. You may even be inspired to be a blessing to someone in a way you haven't been before.

Of course, if you are looking for some tips for managing your financial blessings, you will find that information in a couple of articles, plus how to get all your blessings decluttered and organized this year.

My hope is that as we welcome 2017, this issue will help you realize the blessings in your life, and help you connect and care for them, whatever and wherever they may be. Maybe each of us will discover that we really do have it all.

Marci



POSITIVELY BLESSED IN SWEET SUFFERING

By Marci Narum | Photography: Photos By Jacy

2017 will be the year Delila Mayer walks again. She believes, between therapy and prayer, she will get out of her wheelchair, walk, and be able to go back home. Her positive spirit will help too.

Delila became paralyzed in June 2015. And the reason remains a mystery.

"I couldn't hold a glass of water," Delila says. "I got up at five in the morning and couldn't hold a glass of water. I thought I was having a stroke. So I called 911."

Delila, 74, and her husband live in rural Mott. She says when the ambulance arrived, she could still walk to the door. But whatever was attacking her body was happening rapidly.

"I had to crawl into the ambulance. By the time I got to Bismarck I was totally paralyzed from the neck down. I couldn't do anything for myself. I couldn't touch my nose. I felt like I was in a cocoon and I couldn't get out."

Delila's doctors were not able to determine exactly what caused her paralysis; they could only conclude that she had contracted a virus. Delila received shock treatments to begin restoring movement in her arms and hands, but she was not able to return home. She moved into the Good

Samaritan Society in Bismarck, where she has physical therapy each day. She has been gradually improving.

"I remember the first time I wrote to my husband, it was Valentine's Day. I wrote, 'I love you' and it took me a half hour to do it. It's such a gift to have this back."

Delila is remarkably upbeat about her condition. She considers herself blessed to be having this experience.

"The wonderful thing about this is I didn't have pain. They would have to rub my legs at night because they were hurting a little, but it wasn't bad at all. Most people in here are hurting. They have pain. That was the blessing of it all, I didn't have a lot of pain."

But it's more than that. Delila considers it a privilege to suffer.

"I can't explain it to you. It's sweet suffering what I'm going through. I don't have pain. I pray that whoever comes through this door will be a blessing to me and I'll be a blessing them."

Delila has a heart for loving people. She was a Teens for Life advisor and the youth leader for her parish in Mott for 40 years. So when word got out that she was sick, people came. And people keep coming. Her room at the Good Samaritan has become a place of ministry.

"Someone will come in and ask me a question and I may not know the an-

swer but I say, 'I'll pray about it.'

"I don't get a break from the ministry. It's a joy to be in here. I haven't been able to walk yet. But they are getting me ready to walk soon."

"I wish you could have seen Delila when she first got here," says Good Samaritan's Activity Director and Volunteer Coordinator, Lori Roehrich. "She couldn't move anything."

Now Delila is moving others.

"When somebody new comes she is right there making them feel welcome," Lori explains. "She is visiting with them or praying with them. They always have a friend in Delila. She doesn't let anyone just sit."

"She brought the church to us. Every Monday they come from everywhere. The chapel is full. They come from her community, and all her friends come."

Delila is confident she will go back to her home and community soon.

"I'm getting stronger every day. I can stand for about 15 minutes. I will go back home as soon as I can walk and take care of myself. My husband is 81 and still farming."

"I look back on this past year-and-a-half and it's been the hardest year of my life. But it's been the best year, too." *W*



PEACE OF MIND IN 2017

Setting up a Trust for Your Estate

by JoDell Bourgois



As people journey through life, many are blessed to accumulate wealth and financial security. As life is winding down, many families face the unfamiliar task of transferring this wealth to their family members. Using a trust is a common way to achieve this goal.

There are many advantages to using a trust in your estate plan. If you do not have an estate plan, learn more about the peace of mind that comes from knowing that your goals and desires for your family's financial future are in place by visiting with a trust officer and attorney. A well-prepared estate plan will:

- Ease the transfer of your wealth to your loved ones.
- Avoid probate and maintain privacy.
- Provide for your family's financial security.
- Provide for the care of children with special needs.
- Fulfill charitable giving desires.
- Minimize estate and transfer taxes.

The first step to establishing a trust is meeting with an attorney to draft the trust document and determine the proper trustee appointed by you to oversee the affairs of the trust. A trustee is a person or entity that holds and administers property or assets for the benefit of your loved ones. A trustee may be an individual person or a corporate entity, depend-

ing on your needs. Choosing the correct trustee is a very important task. The trustee you choose will be implementing your goals and desires as directed by you in the trust document. Keep in mind the complexity of your financial plan when making this decision. Many times, appointing a corporate trustee is in the best interest of your loved ones; it's important that the trustee is capable of serving in this important role.

"Corporate trustees perform their fiduciary responsibility with the highest level of trust, loyalty, and care," explains Samantha Victor, Trust Officer at Kirkwood Bank & Trust. "Choosing a corporate trustee provides a professional and knowledgeable team of administrators and advisors who act in the best interests of all beneficiaries with no conflict of interest."

A common reason to establish a trust is to provide for the care of a loved one with special needs. A special needs trust may continue well beyond your death and it is important to appoint a trustee that is capable of fulfilling this important role over a long period of time. As time passes, the needs of your loved one may go unmet. Agencies such as Guardian and Protective Services (GaPS), are able to step in and provide services for those people who are in need and have no family members available to assist them.

Guardian and Protective Services is a local, non-profit organization that provides Trustee services, as well as other protective arrangements to vulnerable adults in North Dakota.

Agencies like this often become a great blessing to people in need and may be able to improve their quality of life by providing security, both financially and emotionally.

“GaPS is often seen as a safety net for vulnerable individuals who have nobody able to assist them,” explains Audrey Uhrich, Program Director for Guardian & Protective Services.

“Regardless of a person’s financial resources, our agency supports the individual by helping the person achieve and/or maintain financial stability, eligibility for assistance programs, and a safe, stable, least-restrictive residence. Without this type of assistance, many of our most vulnerable citizens would be left to fend for themselves.”

The start of a new year is typically a time to start fresh. Peace on earth has been the wish of many through the holiday season. Starting 2017 with a trust for your estate plan could bring you and your family untold peace in your own world. *M*



JoDell Bourgois, CTFA (Certified Trust & Financial Advisor), is the Senior Trust Officer at Kirkwood Bank & Trust in Bismarck. JoDell and her husband, Marcel, have three children. JoDell enjoys spending time with her family and friends and loves to travel.

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 count your
Blessings
 And make
 a plan for your
 family’s future.”



Samantha

Sarah

JoDell

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MAKE THE MEANT-TO'S A THING OF THE PAST

Seven Excuse-Free Ways to Burn More Calories This Year by Lisa Dingsman

As human beings, we strive to take care of others, as well as ourselves. Each year we make a personal promise to get more exercise, but often don't follow through on that promise.

Raise your current bar on physical activity with these seven quick and simple ways to get more active without having to make the time.

Stand while you work. Standing burns nearly 1,000 extra calories a week as opposed to sitting, and takes stress off of the lower back, improves strength in the lower body, and promotes endurance. It also decreases your risk of weight gain and obesity.

Walk more and take the stairs. Instead of shooting that quick email to the person three cubicles down, go for a stroll. Walking (and avoiding the elevator) helps maintain a healthy weight and improves balance and coordination. It also helps manage or prevent heart disease, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes.

Burn calories while watching TV. Sick of those long commercial breaks? Download a Tabata app. 20 seconds of an exercise with a 10 second break. Eight rounds of this and your commercials are suddenly over—all while im-

proving your metabolic rate and aerobic capacity.

Carry a resistance band with you. Calf raises can be modified in several different ways, making them achievable for all ages and fitness levels. The benefits of a calf raise include strengthening the lower legs and ankles which lead to improved balance. Give them a try next time you're waiting in the grocery store line—maybe even add a few kegel!

Engage your abs. There is no better workout tool than a resistance band. You can pack those suckers anywhere and work any part of the body. They are especially phenomenal for the individuals who have a hard time moving or lifting heavy weights. Resistance bands reduce joint pain and enhance the body's elasticity.

The core is responsible for the lower back, pelvis, hips, and abdomen working in harmony. Poor posture, back pain, and overall body weakness is usually linked to a weak core. An easy and convenient way to engage your abs is to tighten them for three seconds and then relax them for three seconds. Repeat this for



a total of three minutes—making sure not to hold your breath. The best part? You can do this while sitting, standing, or lying down.

Drink more water. Not only does water consumption flush out toxins in the body and treat headaches, migraines, and fatigue, it can burn an extra 12 calories in just one glass. The average person should consume eight, eight ounce glasses of water each day, resulting in 100 extra calories burned.

We were all blessed with the gift of

life and when it comes to our health, it's okay to put yourself first. Do your part in keeping your body healthy, not only for yourself but for those who love and care about you. It's not too late to hitch a ride on the bandwagon of New Year's resolutions. *W*



Lisa Dingeman is a devoted wife and the proud mother of two boys. She is a personal trainer in Bismarck and is working on doing her third fitness competition. Lisa has devoted her life to faith, family, and wellness.



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Looks What She Did

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ASHLEY EIDE

It started with a simple writing prompt in a high school English class: Should we donate all the money we use on luxuries to people in third world countries?

Ashley Eide's answer was no.

"If we work hard enough to afford luxuries, we should be able to reward ourselves, but there are also lots of people right here in Bismarck that need our help. We should focus on helping them," she explains.

Ashley kept thinking about that long after she finished her essay. She decided to make "Blessing Bags" for Bismarck's homeless.

"Everyone deserves their tummies to be full, toes to be warm, and most important, their heart to be loved," she says. "I spoke at my church and visited elementary and middle schools, started a drive at my own school, told my friends and family, and created a GoFundMe account so I could get donations from anywhere in the world."

The response took Ashley a bit by surprise. Her post was shared over a hundred times and people from across the country donated. Local dentists, salons, boutiques, and Mary Kay representatives donated toothbrushes, chapstick, makeup, face wash, and other beauty products.

Ashley delivered "Blessing Bags" to Ruth Meiers, Carrie's Kids, and the Abused Adult Resource Center. She's decided to make this an annual event and plans to collect donations year-round. You can donate at www.gofundme.com/bismanblessingbags. If you'd like to donate other items, or get more information, contact her at ashleyelizabeth011@gmail.com.



SANDY McMERTY

Sandy McMerty and her husband, Matt, have a big dream to provide meaningful employment for individuals with special needs. Together they launched The Gifted Bean Coffee House, inside the Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library, to do just that—and to give their son Cristian, a Bismarck teenager with Down syndrome, the opportunity to run his own business in the future.

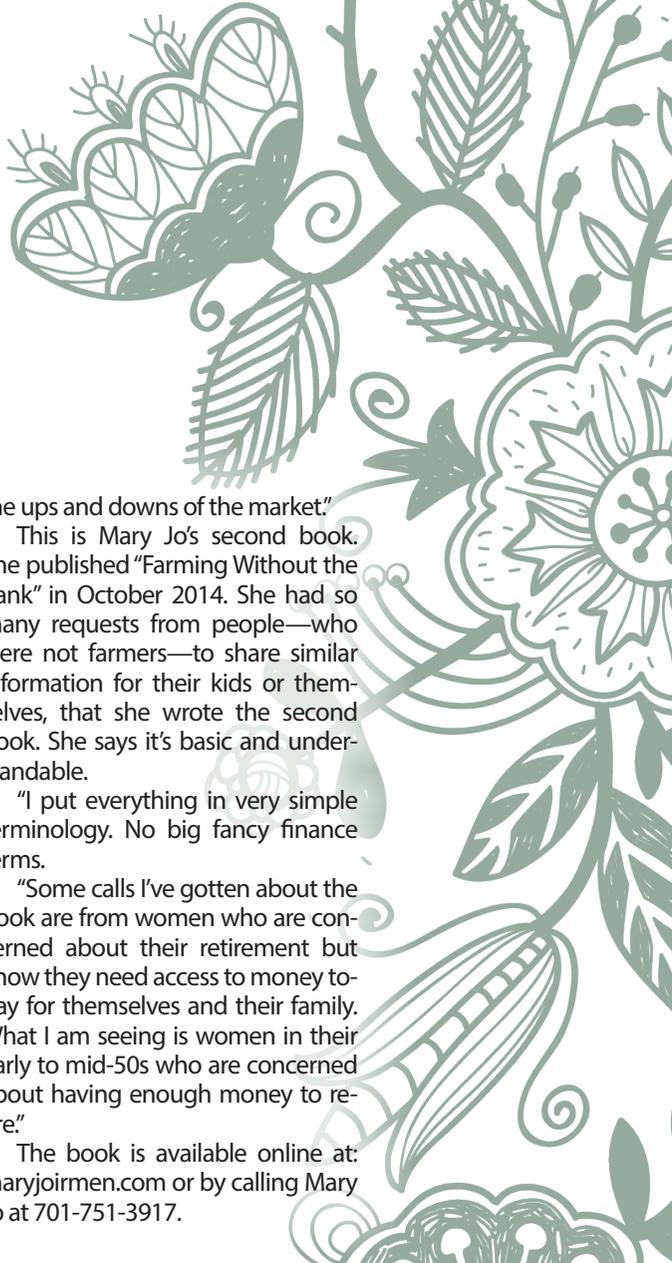
This fall, The Arc of North Dakota awarded them the 2016 Employer of the Year.

"It is a beautiful, humbling reminder that even a small effort towards employment for individuals with unique talents can make a difference," says Sandy.

Following that award, Sandy was recognized by the Center for Technology and Business (CTB) with the 2016 CTB Outstanding Woman in Business Award, which celebrates women who make significant contributions to her organization, her profession, and her community.

Sandy is a deputy commissioner and senior marketing and communications manager of the ND Department of Commerce, serves as president for Designer Genes of North Dakota, assists Matt in managing the Gifted Bean, and so much more.

Sandy is a role model and mentor, both at work and in the Down syndrome community. Her high energy, creative thinking, and commitment to leaving this world a little better than she found it is inspiration at its finest.



MARY JO IRMEN

Are you wealthy? Mary Jo Irmen says your answer depends on your understanding of wealth.

"Some people think, 'I'm wealthy because I'm debt-free,'" Mary Jo says. "That doesn't mean you're wealthy. Wealth is creating money and never having to worry about running out when you retire."

Mary Jo is the owner of Fiscal-Bridge in Bismarck and the author of "Wealth Without the Bank or Wall Street." She says the book, published last November, presents a new way of thinking about how to use your money now and have plenty for retirement too.

"The book explains where people can put money that is not in the market, but where they can have access to it and liquidity of it. Still use it to live, go on vacation, buy cars, buy investments, do whatever you need to do with it today, and have the guaranteed growth, without the risks of

the ups and downs of the market."

This is Mary Jo's second book. She published "Farming Without the Bank" in October 2014. She had so many requests from people—who were not farmers—to share similar information for their kids or themselves, that she wrote the second book. She says it's basic and understandable.

"I put everything in very simple terminology. No big fancy finance terms.

"Some calls I've gotten about the book are from women who are concerned about their retirement but know they need access to money today for themselves and their family. What I am seeing is women in their early to mid-50s who are concerned about having enough money to retire."

The book is available online at: maryjoirmen.com or by calling Mary Jo at 701-751-3917.



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NINE PRAIRIE CHURCHES TO LIFT YOUR SPIRITS

by ND Tourism

North Dakota has a rich legacy of ethnically and architecturally diverse historic churches. Here are nine you'll find on the North Dakota prairie.

1. HALLSON ICELANDIC CHURCH

Located in Cavalier, ND. The church was built in 1897 and represents the Icelandic community in worship. The museum tells the unique story about the life and achievement of this area's first settlers. Special events like the Rendezvous Festival and Pioneer Machine Show are held during the summer months.

2. CAVALIER COUNTY MUSEUM

Located in Dresden, its exhibits include a historic church made of native rock.

3. 1906 VANG LUTHERAN CHURCH

Vang Lutheran Church in Manfred was built in 1906 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to regular services, the church is also part of the Manfred Heritage Museum and hosts exhibit space and community gatherings.

4. ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH-ASSUMPTION ABBEY

Located in Richardton, the Abbey was built in 1909. It features Bavarian Romanesque structure, vaulted ceilings, original paintings and 50 large stained-glass windows.

5. STS. PETER & PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH

This church in Strasburg features an

85-foot steeple and is the embodiment of the Germans from Russia descent.

6. BASILICA OF ST. JAMES CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Basilica of St. James Catholic Church in Jamestown was elevated to minor basilica in 1989 because of its unique architecture and the location of the first cathedral in North Dakota (1889).

7. OLD STONE CHURCH

Located in Buffalo, this Calvary Episcopal Chapel includes a traveling museum, library, and store. It was built in 1885.

8. GARDEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Garden Church was built in 1914 and the first service was held on August 23, 1914. In 1933 Garden and Farland Churches joined Banks Church to form the Banks Parish. The Banks Parish joined the Watford City Parish in 1990 and became the Watford City Area Lutheran Parish.

9. SWEDISH ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Swedish Church, constructed of granite stone which dates back millions of years to the Pleistocene era, is a Gothic revival-style church that has stood the test of time for over a century on the northwestern prairies of Bottineau County just one mile short of the U.S. and Canadian border in Souris. *M*

Check out www.ndtourism.com for more places to visit.



Sarah Murphy,
Owner of Organized and Happy

SO MANY BLESSINGS

Organize Them All in 2017

By Paula Redmann | Submitted Photo

Sarah Murphy believes every single one of us deserves to be organized and happy. That's her mantra and that's why her professional organizing business, Organized and Happy, guides both individuals and businesses along the sometimes messy path of decluttering, tossing, and keeping. Spoiler alert: yes, you get to keep some things, but only if it's organized.

Here are quick, inexpensive, and not-so-painful ways for you to organize your life in 2017.

GIVE EVERYTHING A HOME

Where are your keys? Do you spend 30 minutes looking for your keys, your purse, or that shopping list? By the time you find said item, you're frustrated and sweaty. Every item needs a "home" in your house. Why are there stacks of stuff on your kitchen counter? Because they are orphans. They don't have a home. Put items in the spaces and places they are used. Your bedroom shouldn't store kid's school supplies. The kitchen shouldn't look like the bathroom.

CLEAR THE CLUTTER

What's eating up your kitchen space? Sarah says cookbooks are the guilty party. You're saving that hard-cover beast because you like the banana bread recipe? Traditional option: write the recipe on a card and put it in a recipe box. Newer option: take a picture of it and store it on your favorite digital device.

Containers cure clutter, right? You just buy containers and get organized. Boom! Hold off. Declutter first so you discover your clutter hot spots. Clearing out cluttered space opens up space. Bins, boxes, and baskets are not the answer.

Do you need 16 coffee cups or seven same-size spatulas? Throwing out duplicates is the easiest way to calm the clutter and clear some space. If you have one gadget that you use once a year—that turkey baster or special birthday cake plate—get it out of the cupboard or drawer and put it wayyyyyy up on the top shelf in the kitchen or in the garage. That way you create more efficient use of the kitchen space you have. Wait a minute, back up. The

garage? Yes, that's because you have cupboards in the garage. Do NOT start stacking boxes and bins in the garage. Everything has a home, remember. The garage is for vehicles, not stacks of baby clothes.

DO YOUR KIDS A FAVOR

Baby clothes! Know this: your children do not want 18 years of their clothing when they move out. And Sarah says no one wants to buy clothes that are 18 years old at your next garage sale. Yes, please, keep that adorable blanket, the First Communion dress, the t-ball hat. Get one container for special pieces. Write that child's name on it and gloriously present it to them when they are ready. Try not to cry.

MAKE YOUR BATHROOM PEACEFUL

How about that bathroom? Do you need 15 bottles of shampoo? Probably not. Sarah says our homes are places of love and comfort; they are not warehouses for products. Her other organizing tips for the bathroom include putting pony tail holders on a shower curtain ring and using silverware holders to keep toothpaste, Q-tips, and other bathroom necessities in their place. Big news: towels do not belong on the bedroom or bathroom floor. Seriously. Sarah says over the door hooks in the bathroom do the trick. *Real Simple* magazine says multiple rows of hooks make way for more towels, and accommodate both big and little people in your home.

WEED OUT THAT WARDROBE

Sarah says we wear 20 percent of our clothing 80 percent of the time. One tried and true test is after wearing an item, turn the top of the hanger toward you when hanging it back in the closet. That's your signal that you've worn that item. At the end of a season, save what you've worn and donate or sell those lonely pieces of clothing. Don't save them for someday, or for when they'll fit again. One step to organizing is getting rid of things, not simply moving them to another closet. Tidying is not the same as organizing.

One of the most difficult parts of organizing is the emotion tied to our "stuff."

"But, it's Grandma's tablecloth. It's Aunt Mary's clock."

Sarah says if it's truly a treasure, then display it and love it, don't pack it away. She understands the memories attached to objects, but warns that our homes should not be museums.

"The rule of thumb, quite simply, is to keep items that bring you joy. Your home should be your castle and should scream who you are and what you love when someone walks in the door," Sarah says.

Ready. Set. Go get organized in 2017. *W*



Paula Redmann is the Community Relations Manager for Bismarck Parks and Recreation District. She likes to run, walk, play, sing, putter in her yard, laugh with family and friends, and count her blessings. She married her high school sweetheart, Tom. They have two grown sons, Alex and Max.

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ANGEL 37 KITCHEN

Good for the Body and the Soul

by Jody Kerzman | Submitted Photos

37.

It's a number that speaks to Dickinson's Tana Johnson. It's also a number that appears to her in the most unexpected places and ways.

"My dad, Jim Bosch, was born in 1937. He retired from the North Dakota National Guard after 37 years of service. When he passed away, his hospital room number ended with 37. He's buried at the Veteran's Cemetery in Mandan, and his grave marker includes the number 37," explains Tana. "My dad passed away in January 2012. In the years since then, the number 37 has popped out at me all over the place. It comes to me literally on a daily basis. I live in District 37. The year he passed, it was a very mild January and every morning when I got into my car, the thermometer said 37-degrees. Randomly, on a taxi ride with a co-worker in Arizona, I looked out the window and saw a brick building with the numbers 3737 on it."

Tana is sure it's no coincidence.

"I grew up Catholic and I've always considered myself a spiritual person, but it wasn't until after my dad passed and I started my job as a homeless case manager at Badlands Human Services that I really became spiritually guided.

"I've always looked for ways to help and empower people," she explains. "I knew there was one soup kitchen every Thursday in Dickinson, but I wanted to

do something more than just feed the hungry. Food of course is one of the essential elements we need to live, but I wanted to incorporate the soul part of it and bring the community together."

Enter Angel 37 Kitchen.

"After thinking about this for two years, I started writing a mission statement in July and on November 8, we served our first meal."

Angel 37 Kitchen serves a free meal every Tuesday at Queen of Peace Church, a place that is near and dear to Tana's heart.

"I wanted to honor my dad in a way that was meaningful," says Tana. "I grew up in Queen of Peace. Mom and Dad have been parish members since the church was built in the 1970s. My parents instilled in me a willingness to open yourself to other people. I feel I am called to do this. I feel like this is my legacy."

Tana has worked hard to make her soup kitchen more than just a place where people go to eat. She wants Angel 37 Kitchen to be a place where people from all walks of life go to nourish their body and their soul.

"Yes there are people who need food who can't afford it or those who just want a good home-cooked meal. There are also those who seclude themselves because of depression, anxiety, or mental health illness. We want them to come to Angel 37. We

(LEFT) Tana and her mom, Claudia Bosch

(RIGHT) Tana and her daughter, Jenna





also want the mom who has had a rough day to bring her family to Angel 37 for supper. We want to take the stress off for one meal. We want them to meet new people, to network, to have fellowship. I make sure my Angel 37 playlist of music is ready to go. That helps set the mood and helps people relax and enjoy themselves.



"I've had people tell me they'd love to come, but they don't feel like they should because they can't afford groceries, or they can't afford to go out to a restaurant. I tell them to come anyway. I want people from all walks of life to be at Angel 37. They could offer a job to someone, or give the gift of conversation. I tell them that by being there they might be the gift that someone else needs at that moment in life, or vice versa."



The response to Angel 37 Kitchen has been greater than Tana ever imagined.

"When I first put it on Facebook what I was doing, people came out of the woodwork wanting to know how they could help. People I didn't even know were messaging me. Businesses emailed me asking how they could help. It's been overwhelming and so cool."

Tana started asking for sponsorships and volunteers. She's got a list of people who want to help.

"Families are volunteering together.

Photos By Jacy



Parents have told me they're craving something like this. They want their children to volunteer and to be involved in the community."

Even Tana's 13-year-old daughter, Jenna, has gotten involved. Jenna leads the Angel Kid Korner where children can play while their parents enjoy their meal. But perhaps the most surprising group of volunteers, was a group of five people in recovery from addiction.

"I always introduce the sponsors and the cooks before each meal. When I asked this group how they wanted to be introduced, they wanted to be

called recovering addicts. There was no shame. So I did. And everyone clapped when I introduced them as recovering addicts. That says a lot about our community. There was no judgement.

"Angel 37 Kitchen is magical. Every week something magical happens. You never know who is going to show up, but it is always a blessing."

Tana says she hopes her dad is proud of what she's doing. She feels his presence, and each week, when she decorates the space, she includes a picture of her dad, her very own Angel 37. *M*

Tana is always looking for volunteers and sponsors. Contact her via Angel 37 on Facebook, email her at soulserenity@me.com, or call or text her at 701-290-7559.

Ways you can help!

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- ~ Starting November 8th, 2016 ~

~If you are interested in any of the above or have any questions..... please contact Tana Johnson at 701-290-7559 ~



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Sara holding Isla



DOUBLY BLESSED BY TWINS ONE MIRACLE, ONE ANGEL

by Jody Kerzman | Submitted Photos

Beckett in
the NICU



Isla in her early
NICU days



The road to motherhood was a long, bumpy one for Sara Murray. She and her husband, Jeff, struggled with infertility for years. After several extensive infertility treatments and procedures, Sara finally got pregnant. They soon learned they were expecting twins, a boy and a girl.

"We were ecstatic. When you try for so long to get pregnant and then get two for the price of one, you feel like you hit the lottery," says Sara.

While twin pregnancies often come with complications, Sara's pregnancy was pretty uneventful.

"I had severe morning sickness at the beginning, but I didn't care. We were pregnant with twins and that was all that mattered."

The babies were due April 21, 2015. On January 10, Sara had a routine checkup.

"Everything looked wonderful," Sara recalls. "Five days later, my water broke. I was 26 weeks along. We raced to the hospital and prayed they could stop labor."

Despite their best efforts, doctors were not able to stop Sara's labor. She delivered her baby boy, Beckett, first. Two hours later, her daughter, Isla was born.

"I didn't get to see them when they were born, not even a glimpse. They were taken to the NICU immediately."

Five hours later, Sara finally got to see her babies. Born 14 weeks early, Beckett weighed just one pound, eight ounces. Isla was two pounds, one ounce.

"Seeing them was emotional and shocking. They had tubes coming out from everywhere but I was immediately in love with them, tubes and all," says Sara.

Sara spent a few days in the hospital and spent most of that time in the NICU with her babies. When she was discharged, she and Jeff continued to spend much of their time at the hospital.

"Beckett was doing much better than Isla. He was smaller, but his lungs were much more developed," Sara remembers. "Five days after they were born, the doctor told us he was going to take out Beckett's breathing tube. He said he had been showing signs he was ready. We decided to leave while they took the tubes out. We didn't want to see that."

But that's when Sara's road to mother-

hood suddenly got even bumpier.

"We got a call from the hospital, telling us something wasn't right with Beckett. They weren't sure what was wrong, but his blood labs were off."

Doctors suspected a brain bleed, but a scan of Beckett's brain was clear. Doctors concluded Beckett had an infection. Then, the phone rang again.

"The nurse said 'we need you here right now,'" recalls Sara. "It was a terrible call. They said Beckett's infection had gotten into his blood and he had gone into septic shock. The doctor told me he's very, very sick and to just keep thinking positive, but he told me Beckett might not make it. A huge team of people was working on him, but he got worse. They cut his chest open and put a chest tube in. We just had to stand there. We were screaming, bawling, yelling at him to stay with us.

"It got to the point where there was nothing else they could do for him. I remember a nurse saying 'call it.' They pulled the tubes from him and I held him. He took his last breath in my arms. It was absolutely terrible. It was the worst day of our lives."

But the couple knew they had to persevere. They spent their time at the same hospital where they had lost one baby, caring for their other baby.

"The first week I cried all day every day. I cried at the hospital. I cried at home. I'd wake up crying and go to bed crying. We were so scared. We thought we'd lose Isla too. Beckett had been doing better than her, and he was gone."

But Isla beat the odds. On May 1, 2015, after 106 days in the hospital, she went home.

"She's a miracle baby."

Still, Sara says it feels like something is missing.

"We talk about Beckett every day. It's



Isla today

very complicated having a twinless twin. Every milestone Isla meets is bittersweet. We know there should be two babies doing what she's doing. As much as we love her and need her, it's difficult having a surviving twin. She is a constant reminder of the baby we lost."

Sara struggled with guilt, especially at the beginning.

"I just could not wrap my head around how badly my body had failed the babies."

Needing answers, Sara saw several specialists. None could give her a reason for what had happened. They simply said it could have happened to anyone. While not an answer, it has given Sara a purpose. She wants others to hear her story, and to talk about infant loss and stillbirths.

"I connected with some great people on Facebook who have also lost a baby. Talking and connecting with other people who have been there helps. When you lose a baby, you feel isolated. No one gets it, no one understands. I hope my story can help someone in a similar situation to know they're not alone."

And while Sara is helping others, Isla is helping her.

"She's a miracle. She saved our lives. When Beckett died, Jeff and I had a feeling that we didn't want to be here. But we had to keep going for her."

A miracle and a blessing, whose smile and joy for life has helped Sara find joy again, despite the bumps in the road. *TM*

"I hope my story can help another couple, another mom, someone in a similar situation to know they're not alone. I don't want anyone to feel alone."

—Sara Murray





AN INTERVIEW WITH MY UNHEALTHY MOTHER, ABOUT HEALTH

by Amber Rae Bernhardt | Submitted Photos

(ABOVE) Amber with her mom, Lana Bernhardt

When my mother was 17 she was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

"Did you think you were going to die?" I asked her as we prepared for this article.

"Most definitely," she replied.

"How did you get through that?" I inquired.

"I stopped looking ahead," she told me. "I made short, small, attainable goals. Get through this minute. Eat a few bites. Take a few steps. Just keep going."

"What made you keep going?" I wondered.

"When they marked me for radiation, they drew lines from sternum to navel and shoulder to shoulder. That cross started my journey of faith," she said. "I had a life to live. I took short steps. After that, I just kept moving."

She got married that summer.

"After many years, during a procedure, they told me the Hodgkin's was gone. The incision from that surgery made a 'V' from my abdomen to my back. My victory scar."

I was born the next year.

"I set more small goals. My faith grew stronger. I prayed every day 'God please just let me get my children through high

school.'"

With a new lease on life, my mother went on to do all the wrong things. She drank and smoked too much. She had grown accustomed to a short-sighted way of thinking and that practice became her purpose to live in the moment.

Nearly 30 years later, my little brother was graduating from high school, I was getting married, and my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer.

"After the appointment I got in my car, drove to the church, and broke down because God had given me exactly what I'd asked for."

It was then she realized she owed it to God to not take her life for granted and her penance would be paid. The effects of the radiation would take their toll over the next decade and a half.

After the mastectomy came 14 major surgeries and countless minor procedures to remove or repair organs that were no longer functioning. Nearly five years ago, she was diagnosed with CLL—chronic lymphocytic leukemia, a type of cancer of the blood and bone marrow.

"Now the only steps I can take are small



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ones!" my mother laughed. "I'm still not ready to go and I'm not leaving anytime soon."

To the purpose of this story: there were things I wanted to know from my mother that I could share with all of you. What can someone who is not in good health, or who doesn't have the means or resources for a trainer or nutritionist, do to achieve personal wellness?

"Just keep moving," my mother offers. "Set attainable goals. Start by walking to the end of the driveway and back every day, until you can walk to the end of the block and then around the block. Just. Keep. Moving.

"Don't go on crash diets. Just make good choices. Limit sugar and salt. Eat lots of green vegetables and get enough protein and calcium. In moderation enjoy the things you like. Soon your body will prefer the good things. Always eat breakfast and drink a lot of water. You won't be as hungry during the day.

"Most importantly, don't wait until you're diagnosed to live a healthy life. I waited too long to stop smoking and drinking and start eating better. What saved me was the fact that I was always active. Because of that I was physically strong enough to get through it. It wasn't too late for me, it isn't too late for you.

"It's important to have a support system who knows what you're going through. I encourage everyone who is facing an illness like this to join a group and discuss their journey. It helps to realize you're not alone.

"Finally, you only have one life, and only one body to live it in. Treat it with kindness and respect. You're going to live longer than

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2nd Tuesday of each month

you think you will so never stop moving."

I am nearly the same age my mother was when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. I have been far more fortunate than she has in regard to health, but have not been kind or respectful to my body. I owe it to myself, and to her, to start. It's not too late.

I'm inspired to take a short walk. Won't you join me? *M*



Amber Rae is an adult theatre kid, a career promoter and a proud mama. She loves Elton John, stand-up comedy, well-written television, and spontaneous travel. Amber is the YMCA marketing director in Bismarck and lives in Mandan with her rock 'n' roll partner, their two beautiful boys, and their bulldog.

The quotes in this interview have been edited for length and content, with permission. Read the full version of this story at inspiredwomanonline.com.

ANNE CHAMBERS

At Home. In Tune. Making History.

by Audrey Wentz | Submitted Photos



Drum roll, please...

History is being made in the band room at St. Mary's Central High School. Anne (Jundt) Chambers is the first woman to serve as a high school band director in the Bismarck-Mandan area. She started in August and is right at home in the school; adding a little more pep while she is there.

A native of Bismarck, Chambers graduated in 2007 with honors from SMCHS. While in high school, Anne earned the honor of first chair in the SMCHS Wind Orchestra under the direction of Mr. William J. Schmidt. As a clarinetist, she was principal player for four consecutive years in the North Dakota High School All-State Band and Orchestra. In her senior year, she received the John Philip Sousa Award in recognition of her musical talent and leadership.

Anne received her Bachelors of Music Education and Bachelors of Science in Elementary Education degrees from Northern State University in Aberdeen, South Dakota.

While in college at NSU, she had the opportunity to perform with the band "Kansas." She was selected by audition to be one of 18 students to participate in conducting workshops sponsored by the University of Minnesota for two consecutive years. Before making her way back to St. Mary's, Anne served as the assistant director of bands at the Brandon Valley Public Schools in Brandon, South Dakota.

Last fall, Anne and her husband, Ben, accepted the positions to direct the high school and junior high bands within the Light of Christ Catholic Schools. Ben conducts the junior high band and Anne is living her dream. She says she has always dreamed of being a teacher, so to pursue her dream at her alma mater with her husband has been a huge blessing to her and to the students.

"I've always looked up to my band directors, in particular Bill Schmidt, who taught at SMCHS for over 30 years and it is my goal to continue on the

legacy of excellence within the music program," says Anne.

This is a goal she has already begun to accomplish in the short amount of time she has been at St. Mary's. Anne has already added new pep band tunes, taken the pep band to Fargo to play for the Class AA state football championship, and has the bands sounding great. And that's just in the first half of the school year. She is happy to be back at SMCHS and is excited about the future of the band. It's a future her students are excited about as well. Anne says it has been a joy to be able to teach and pursue her career in a Catholic education system. She says she is exactly where she is supposed to be.

"God had a plan for me and when you follow the pieces, it all works out." *TM*



Audrey Wentz is a junior at St. Mary's Central High School. She writes for her school's newspaper and is an active participant in student council, speech, band, and various other activities. She loves spending time with friends and family, and loves to travel.



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This project is/was supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number B04MC28118, Maternal and Child Health Services, total award amount for the period of April 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017 is \$68,676. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.

BECAUSE GUYS INSPIRE TOO!

OH MAN

**ANDREW HERSHEY:
COMFORT MY PEOPLE**

by Marci Narum | Submitted Photos

At 22, Andrew Hershey is comfortable with the idea of being uncomfortable. He is preparing himself to live for 11 months without all the comforts of home—most notably, a warm bed, good food, and modern plumbing. And then there are those things every 20-something needs at any given moment: coffee and free Wi-Fi. These comforts will be scarce when backpacking through the mountains of Kazakhstan or traveling through the deserts of Morocco, just a couple of the countries he will see on the World Race. The World Race is a mission trip that will take Andrew to 11 countries in 11 months.

“The mission of the World Race is to do whatever we can to bring God’s kingdom to Earth,” Andrew says. “So whether that’s service projects, leading Vacation Bible School, street ministry, door-to-door ministry, praying for people, or sharing our personal testimonies, that’s what we will do. If we can shine the light in a dark place, that’s what we want to do. We’ll be sent out in groups of four or six in a ministry team. But I will be part of a squad of 30. And we will be together for

11 months.”

Andrew has been on mission trips before, but nothing like the World Race. He says this one challenges a person’s endurance and abilities, especially the ability to live simply, without the comforts of life most of us enjoy in the United States.

“I think they call it a race because it requires endurance, perseverance, faith, and commitment. The days are long and a lot of things are uncomfortable, whether that’s toilets in the ground that you have to squat over or eating food that is not necessarily good, or good for you. Or just doing what you need to do to be part of the culture.”

Kicking off in Mexico 11 years ago, the World Race is described as “a raw adventure in faith.” It takes people out of their comfort zones to places where there are others needing to be comforted, fed, and loved through the word of God. Some have never heard it. The route Andrew’s squad will take, for example, is called “Expedition 10/40”—from Spain to East Asia.

“We are going to parts of the world that have the most people who have nev-

Andrew on a mission trip in the Dominican Republic



er heard the word of God. We will start in Spain, hike around south Spain, and then go to Morocco, and over to Egypt and up into Israel, Jordan, and Cyprus. Then we'll go to Turkey, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, and China.

"Each country, month to month, will be different. We'll have everything on us in a backpack as well as a tent. We may stay in a hut, hostel, barn, or other shelter.

"I never thought I would be able to do the World Race. I went on a couple of mission trips and trainings and it was through those experiences I saw the purpose of it. I saw there is more fulfillment and joy in giving versus receiving, taking, or holding onto what we have."

And that is coming from a young man who firmly describes himself as being formerly selfish.

"I never really had a desire to do missions work or travel overseas. I just wanted to stay comfortable. My dream was to work, make a lot of money, and get a house on a lake. My perception of that dream started to change when I realized there is more purpose in life than to live it just for myself."

Andrew says the transformation started to happen while he was in college, as he started to understand his faith and what God was leading him into.

"What is given to me should only be used to bless someone else," Andrew explains.

"I realized how big the picture is. The story in the Bible is how Jesus came and

died for us. And people overseas are not hearing it."

Andrew is a native of Rugby. And like many college students today, he graduated with significant debt: \$32,000. But after attending the University of North-western-St. Paul, transferring and graduating from Mayville State University, Andrew came up with a plan to pay it off quickly.

"I decided that if I can live like a college student for one more year I'll put away as much as I can toward my student loan debt. It took me one year and one month and I finished paying off my debt. That's when I decided this is the opportunity to do the World Race. There's no better time in life to go. I'm not married, I have no debt, and it's a way to experience God and make Him known in this world."

Andrew needs to raise \$18,617 to cover his trip costs, plus another \$3,000 for his own expenses. Andrew is a youth leader at Charity Lutheran Church in Bismarck, and his World Race adventure starts in August this year. He says raising the money doesn't worry him; he is comfortable trusting God to provide.

"I leave August '17 and I want you on my team. It's my little slogan. Because the more people that are involved in this mission and pray about it, the more lives get touched. It's definitely a team atmosphere, through prayer or through financial support. In college I heard once that if we're not called to go, we are called to send." *M*

Follow and support Andrew on his blog at andrewhershey.theworldrace.org or call him at 701-681-0116.

(MIDDLE) Andrew on a Mission trip in East Asia

(RIGHT) Andrew hiking in South Dakota, preparing for the World Race



NO SHORTAGE OF BLESSINGS

by Betty Mills

One of the childhood memories that sticks in my head happened in 1936, the dismal pit of the drought and depression in western North Dakota where I grew up. I had gone with my parents to an auction sale at a neighboring farm, and on the way home my mother asked my father, "Didn't you see the hole in that kettle you bought?"

"Of course I did," my father replied, "but I don't think Henry has enough money to get to the west coast as he plans, and he's too proud to accept charity, so it was the only way I could figure out to help."

It was a lesson in neighborliness I never forgot, and at the same time for perhaps the first time in my young life, I counted my blessings. We were not leaving our home and going to some strange new place, we didn't need to sell our belongings; we always had enough money from my point of view as a child. And it was reassuring to discover I had a father with a kind heart, in addition to being the go-to guy if anything in our lives developed a glitch.

Sometimes it can be a real mood changer to consider the blessings in one's life. There is, of course, no shortage of glitches in this world ranging from monumental to annoying, but making a list of them is hardly going to turn on the sunshine. Actually, too much mental mucking around in the negative side can add to one's woes. I am reminded of a poem from way-back-when by Ella Wheeler Wilcox entitled "Solitude."

Laugh and the world laughs with you;
Weep, and you weep alone.

For the sad old earth must borrow its mirth,
But has trouble enough of its own.

There's an additional punch later in the poem which says, "There are none to decline your nectared wine, but alone you must drink life's gall."

Drinking gall strikes me as a non-starter so I try to follow her original advice.

As an antidote to gall, it is revealing to make a list of life's blessings, and I'd start with community. This really is a great place to live including the fact that if there is something really bugging you, there's an official within reach of your phone. Try that in New York City.

There's no shortage of things to do depending on your inclination. Last month there were concerts, plays, ball games, even political controversy complete with national coverage, if you were looking for a real-life scenario. And for free you could have gone to my great-granddaughter's school program complete with music, a stage full of well-behaved children in their Sunday best, and an occasional unrehearsed outbreak of laughter.

Add to that the possibility of sliding through an intersection or getting stuck in a snow bank for that extra dollop of excitement.

Then there's family and friends. Who could ask for anything more? Although it helps to have your car start in the morning.

The list should also include the opportunity to give someone else a lift. A recent article I read about mental health stated that helping others can be a mood changer, and there are numerous activities always in need of a helping hand.

But the bigger world out there is inescapable. *Time* magazine recently put out an issue headlined "The Most Influential Photos of All Time." Included was the horrifying picture of a small boy's drowned body face down on a Turkish beach. The family had

been attempting to escape to Greece, but the boat capsized and the mother and her two little boys perished. The picture was titled: "The photograph that opened borders" because it brought home the plight of the migrants trying to bring their families to a safer place.

It reminded me of a 1937 photograph in *Life* magazine of an infant splattered with blood, alone and crying in the middle of a rubble-strewn street in Shanghai, victim of the Japanese invasion of China.

Those pictures put a human face on the suffering which goes on in our world and as that ancient English poet John Donne put it, "I am involved in mankind and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

They also remind me to count my blessings every day for the good life that is mine. *M*



Betty Mills was a weekly political columnist for the Bismarck Tribune for 25 years. Among the many blessings in her life, Betty has four children, seven grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

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TRUST YOUR BABY AND YOUR BODY

HypnoBirthing® Can Provide a 'More Beautiful Birthing Experience'

by Tracie Bettenhausen | Photography: Photos by Jacy

For the past three months, for about an hour a day, sometimes more, Allison Lindstrom has been putting her mind into a place of relaxation, trust, and calm.

It's a practice that involves her husband, Ryan, and her unborn baby girl. For about 25 minutes, Allison focuses on daily affirmations, gaining confidence, and losing fear. The daily affirmations help Allison develop a trust in her body, and in the baby.

"Trust the baby knows what it's doing," she says.

For another 25 minutes, Allison and Ryan together go through rainbow relaxation.

"It's called 'rainbow' because we go through the colors of the rainbow, imagining the colors surrounding our body, relaxing us," Allison says. "We do it together so that I get used to his voice relaxing me, and he gets used to helping me relax."

The process is called HypnoBirthing®. Colette Rudolph, Registered Nurse, is a certified consulting hypnotist authorized to teach the Mongan Method of the practice.

"We teach couples about the myths we learn, that birthing has to be so painful. That cycle of fear creates tension and pain in the body. We teach what hypnosis is, and what it's not, and then we get into

how giving birth can be calm and gentle if you want it to be," Colette says. "Hypnosis is not something that's done to you, it's something you allow yourself to experience. I wonder, where was this method when I was having my three children?"

Colette says with some seriousness that women love to tell birthing horror stories that scare expectant women.

"I give out a button that says, 'PLEASE! Only happy birth stories. My baby is listening,'" Colette laughs.

Colette got into HypnoBirthing at the prompting of a colleague she met at a hypnotherapy conference.

"I had been helping people with pain management, anxiety, depression, weight loss, and smoking cessation. Most of my career in nursing had been with hospice and end-of-life care, 25 years," she says. "There was so much focus on grave situations, and I wanted to start helping people in the here-and-now. Life and death are very similar in many ways. Bringing new life into this world can bring such joy and energy back into your life."

A mother does not have to forgo an epidural or other drugs to use HypnoBirthing during delivery, Colette says, but that is one of the reasons many women choose the method.

"When you drug the mom, you drug

the baby, and that interferes with that critical timing of bonding with the baby," Colette says.

In addition to relaxation and focus, HypnoBirthing employs three types of breathing: calm breathing, to be done between contractions; surge breathing, to be done while experiencing contractions; and birth breathing, to be done in place of the time when many women hold their breath and push.

"We are encouraged not to push, but to do more visualization and breathing," Allison says. "Imagine a flower opening up, like your muscles unfolding."

Allison says a natural birth is her goal. She says they've submitted their birth plan with the doctor, and expect to go through with it unless there is an emergency.

She says the daily meditations have also been a bonding experience with her baby, and she feels what she calls a "deeper love" for the baby. They're in this together.

"I just never wanted to need to rely on drugs and medication for this. Women have given birth for years without that, so why would I introduce it if I don't have to. It's just a way to bring my baby into the world that I can feel good about," Allison says. "I think if she's brought into the world gently, it could affect her for the rest of her life." *M*



Tracie Bettenhausen is a senior staff writer/editor at Basin Electric. She gives a warm home and regular meals to two once-foster, now-adopted kitties, Basil and Sweet Pea. She is a meditation wannabe who spends too much time on Twitter.

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BRIDGES, ALLEYS, AND THE MILLION MILE SMILE

by Patrick Atkinson | Submitted Photos

This letter is to say thanks... and you know why.

When I left working in the battlefields of Central America to work United Nations human trafficking issues in Southeast Asia, I wrote everyone I knew and asked for their prayers. "Whatever's ahead is going to be big," I said.

"I'm scared," is what I meant.

During these past 38 years of working in the darkest shadows of society, I have been frightened more times than you can imagine. Sometimes the reasons are obvious, like when a bullet struck my car window, or when a bomb shattered my hotel window at night.

Illness brings us a special fear since it affects us on very intimate levels. The time my weight dropped from 160 lbs. down to 107, it took every ounce of energy I had just to breathe. "Take one more," I would whisper while lying alone.

In specific moments like these we know why we are afraid. Most of the time though, it's because there is something out there that we just don't know.

At 12, Jordan was one of the smartest boys I have ever known. He certainly had the quickest sense of humor and, with his smile and natural ability, could have been an actor anywhere in the world. Instead he wanted to be a doctor and help the poor.

When he was 14, Jordan was at the top his class. "I'll make it," he said to me. "Don't worry."

But I did worry because I knew how scared he was. You see, Jordan was running from a past where he had never known his father and where his mother still worked the streets. He hid under the bed when some men hurt his sisters, and still had scars from when those same men found him hiding.

Two days after he turned 15, Jordan ran away for some silly reason and traded school (and everything else) for dark and dirty alleyways and even dirtier, darker rooms. He was smart enough, though, to call me and to stay in touch.

I often looked for Jordan and when we met, it was like old times as we talked and laughed and I tried like the devil (or worked hard against him) to get that boy back.

God finally gave me the chance one night in December when Jordan became angry, drugged, and dangerous. He was sick and infected, and in this altered state, chose the wrong street gang and picked the wrong fight.

I later found Jordan sitting on the ledge of a 180-foot high bridge with swollen and bloodied eyes. He saw nothing ahead. We ended up talking for hours.

That night I told Jordan some very

simple truths—that he was loved and that people liked him. That he was sick and could get better. And, yes, he could even go back to school and start to hope... to dream... again.

Maybe it was the cold of the steel or the wind of the night, but Jordan eventually breathed deeply and said we should leave that bridge.

Helen Keller once wrote that our struggles in life become our greatest blessings; that they make us patient and sensitive, and teach us that although the world is full of suffering, it is equally full of overcoming it.

When we believe we have a small chance of beating back something that shouldn't be happening, that chance gives us hope. In this hope we find... we create... strength. With that strength we take one step forward and then another, and soon we are moving ahead.

For years I wondered what people meant when they chided me to count my blessings. What? I thought. Don't they know about the violence and poverty, bloodshed, and threats we work with every day?

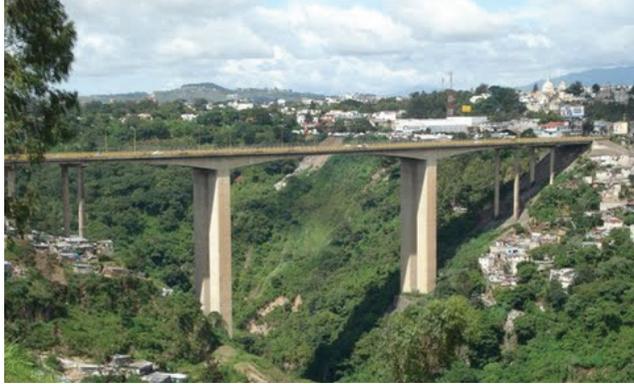
No, they don't, because these dynamics of my international work are mine, not theirs. They have their own unique situations from which to learn. "Why is this happening? What can I do now, or learn from this?" In every situation laid before us we can choose to discover that which makes us stronger; in every moment learn what it is that will bless us and make us stronger forever.

Jordan went on to college, and in his second year moved home to live with



(LEFT) Jordan

(BELOW) The bridge Jordan sat on



his mother. The last time I saw him, for old time sake we walked the alleyways and backstreets that were once his, and we sat on his ledge. His road back wasn't easy, but he made it.

His smile can still be seen a million miles away. *M*



Bismarck native Patrick Atkinson is the founder of The GOD'S CHILD Project international charity that cares for and educates 13,700 people worldwide each day. He is considered one of the nation's foremost experts in human trafficking and street gang violence, and is a published author with books in worldwide distribution.

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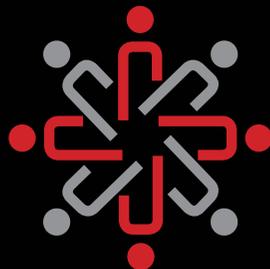
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COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTOR

BISMAN STILETTO | SUBMITTED PHOTOS



Melissa Hill Hammond is the founder and president of BisMan Stiletto. She shares about the group:

WHAT IS BISMAN STILETTO?

We are professional women committed to completing service projects that are impactful to Bismarck Mandan.

GIVE US A LITTLE HISTORY OF YOUR GROUP:

In 2012 I was starting an insurance agency and was involved in every networking group that would allow me to participate. I had the realization that all of that was only benefiting me. It didn't feel good. Earlier in the year my agency had hosted a Stiletto Race to raise funds for March of Dimes. I reached out to those women that participated and asked if they would be interested in forming an official group focused on giving back. Together with seven other business women we began to develop BisMan Stiletto. We functioned with a small group for a few years. In 2015 we received our 501(c)3 status. Today we have over 50 members, have completed over 1,500 service hours, and donated over \$15,000

to other local organizations.

WHAT SERVICES OR BENEFITS DO YOU OFFER?

I am proud to announce we just added our first sister Stiletto Group, Minot Stiletto. Each Stiletto Group has the flexibility to work with any other organization in their community to complete a service project. Our mission is to do a lot of good with a little effort from everyone involved.

HOW ARE YOU DIFFERENT FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS LIKE YOURS?

We only fundraise one time per year with the Stiletto Race. The monies raised from that event allow us to do the work we want to do. The community has been very generous with their sponsorships. The race is their unique way to give back. The other special feature of Stiletto is that we have a service requirement of 12 service hours per year to maintain active membership.

WHO DO YOU HELP?

We work with other nonprofits to



help make the community better. One of the responsibilities of our members is to find projects. If a nonprofit has a need that we can come in and resolve, those are the types of projects we enjoy doing. We recently helped Tracy's Sanctuary House by hosting the White Party for Purpose. Other groups we have helped are Designer Genes, Hope Manor, Welcome House, Ruth Meiers, and several others.

HOW CAN PEOPLE PARTICIPATE OR JOIN?

There are a few ways people can participate. We are always looking to expand membership. We ask prospective members to visit our website online at bismanstileto.com to fill out the "Become a Member" section. Our Membership Chair, Stacy Sturm, will reach out and go over our group in further detail to make sure they are aligned with what we are doing. Race sponsorship is key to furthering our group. We would be thrilled to add new sponsorships to our upcoming race held on July 4, 2017. *W*



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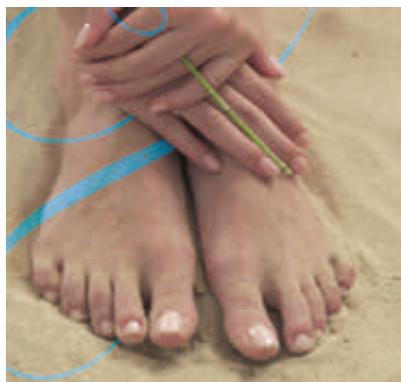
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Inspired Woman

MAGAZINE

For even more on the stories in this issue—including photo galleries of Delila, HypnoBirthing®, and Tana—visit our website: inspiredwomanonline.com



Join "Inspired Woman" editors Marci Narum and Jody Kerzman on an exciting tour to Chicago departing late September.

Enjoy a variety of activities including tea at the famous Drake Hotel, theater, The Chicago Architectural Foundation's River Cruise, Gospel Brunch at the House of Blues, Chicago Art Institute, and so much more! We will find it inspiring! Brochures available in January from our travel partner, Satrom Travel & Tour, 258-5000 (next to Barnes & Noble).



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