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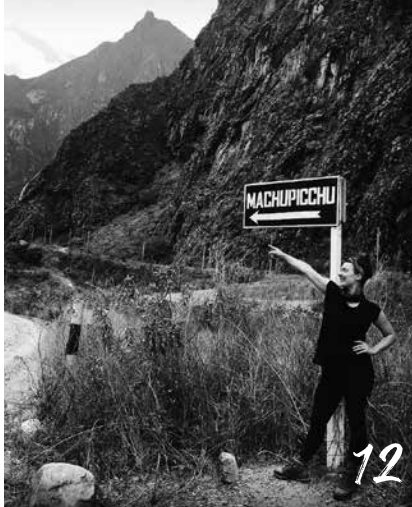
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in my name, there am I with them."**

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Editors' Notes



A few weeks ago, my eight-year-old daughter spent a Sunday afternoon going from neighbor to neighbor and helping with yard work. She planted flowers for one neighbor and helped another fix a broken sprinkler head. The sun was setting when she finally came into the house. She had dirt on her nose, in her hair, and under her fingernails; she also had a smile on her face. As I tucked her into bed that night, she yawned and proclaimed, "I love this neighborhood."

I smiled as I kissed her goodnight and thought what a lucky kid she is. Our neighborhood is nothing fancy, but the people who live here are fantastic. My neighbors are quick to help shovel snow, keep an eye on my kids, and call me when a garage door has been left open. Like Morgan, I love this neighborhood and this community.

I think you'll find similar stories from people throughout North Dakota. Our sense of community is strong, and North Dakotans take pride in their communities. The stories in this issue are proof of that. From stories of flood fights and clean up, to stories of giving back, this issue will give you all the feels.

From the very beginning of this journey as magazine editors and publishers, Marci and I have always felt that Inspired Woman could be more than a magazine. So we're pretty excited about our first-ever women's conference coming up in Medora, North Dakota this September.

Be sure to check out all the details on our website, inspiredwomanonline.com.

Jody



North Dakota is like a small town. When was the last time you met a new person and *didn't* have some kind of connection with him or her? You went to college with his cousin. Her husband was in the same National Guard Unit as your brother. Or everyone you meet and interview for a magazine article seems to be from Mott or has connections to the small town in southwest North Dakota. Just ask Jody!

Our state is a community. It makes me smile when I hear that people have moved here from another state because of work and chosen to stay because they feel like they belong. To me, that's what community is. It's a place you know you belong—instead of hoping to fit in.

Community is also where you know your neighbors will watch out for you. The Garrison-Max Ambulance District is working closely with the community to make sure anyone—tourist or resident—has a better chance of surviving a medical emergency.

Pam Vukelic never disappoints when she takes on an assignment. She spent time having meals with people at two nonprofit organizations that provide free meals in the community. Pam wanted to learn more about these services available so she could deliver the best possible story.

Taking time to think about community in your life and what it means is soul-nurturing. Beth Anderson shares a beautiful perspective on that. I hope you find it as meaningful as I do.

Because Jody and I see North Dakota as a community and believe women are stronger when we celebrate, encourage, and empower each other, we are thrilled to announce our first women's conference in Medora this fall. Be sure to check out the details in this issue and on our website. You can register for ELEVATE online!

Marci

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

CREATED

FOR COMMUNITY

by Beth Anderson

While driving across the prairies of North Dakota one winter day, I found myself listening to the voice of forest ecologist Suzanne Simard talking about trees on the "Ted Radio Hour." Maybe it was the alluring idea of lush green forests in contrast to the barren white landscape whisking past, but I found myself drawn in. Simard and her team had discovered that trees do not simply exist side by side, independently striving to secure the nutrients and sunlight they each need for their own growth, but rather, hidden beneath the forest floor lies a complex system of roots, microbes, and fungi—an information superhighway hundreds of miles long—that allows trees to communicate even across various species. What these trees were saying to one another was fascinating. They were not competing, but collaborating!

The trees were actually reaching out to each other, some sending signals of what they needed, others responding! Stronger trees were sending nutrients to weaker trees, even from one variety to another, and in the sharing and the receiving, the entire stand became stronger and healthier.

This story led me to reflect on our human communities. The bonds that connect us to one another really are most beautiful and sacred.

Human beings are built for connectedness. Of all the animals in the kingdom, humans have the biggest brains relative to size. Why? According to anthropologist Robin Dunbar, the strongest predictor of a species' brain size is the size of its social group. So get busy and schedule that girls' night out! It really will be good for your brain.

In his book "Social," Matthew Lieberman reveals that the brain responds to social pain and physical pain in similar ways. When feeling rejected, the part of the brain that processes physical pain lights up with activity. An unkind word or feeling excluded really can send us reeling. Even for the most introverted, too much time alone creates a physical longing for human interaction. (Who remembers Wilson from the movie "Castaway"?). Healthy social interactions, on the other hand, stimulate the brain in positive ways. In fact, connecting with other people can be as good for your health as quitting smoking. And acts of altruism create the most positive benefits. We are happiest when we are helping others.

My favorite Biblical image is the Body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12, which conveys the essence of community—all are needed, all have a part to play. *The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you." (verse 21) Nor should the ear wish that it were an eye, for if all were eyes, how would the body hear?* Rather, the body is not whole unless all parts are present and all parts are sharing their gifts. When one part suffers, the whole body suffers, and when one part rejoices, the whole body rejoices.

Just like the trees in Simard's fascinating forests, individually and collectively, our communities are strongest and healthiest when we reach out to one another. *W*



Beth Anderson is a deacon in the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America). The joys in her life include her husband Dallas and their two beautiful girls. Beth loves cooking and getting lost in a good novel.

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GREEN SPACES & GREEN PLACES

STRONG AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

by Melanie Carvell | Submitted Photo

What does it mean to be a part of a healthy, thriving community? We know we need good governance and a collaborative culture among our political leaders, along with community engagement and empowerment. We understand the need for walkable neighborhoods and schools that are physically integrated with the populations they serve. Thoughtful planning and development of natural environments for us to be able to connect and thrive is critically important. Gratefully, Bismarck officials have worked with developers to ensure new urban developments provide for neighborhood parks, playgrounds, natural areas, and trails. Time spent in nature is a powerful antidote to stress and a dependable

route to better individual health and improved community wellness.

After a long, frigid winter, our collective spirit has soared with the chance to get out and enjoy our green spaces, neighborhoods, and yards. Bismarck-Mandan's combined network of paved trails (109 miles), parks (84 and counting), playgrounds (70), riverfront spaces, ballparks, and golf courses have become a beehive of activity. This time of year, when the land and our spirits are renewed, reminds me of something John Steinbeck said: "What good is the warmth of summer without the cold of winter to give it sweetness?" Summer is so sweet in North Dakota.

The chance to explore and experience nature doesn't just provide

pleasant views. Even just a few minutes in a green space can improve our mood and lower anxiety and depression. Exposure to natural light increases our vitamin D and boosts our immune system. Absorbing the sounds of nature—the meadowlark's song, a robin's tweet, and the encouraging honks of migrating geese—can trigger a relaxation response in our brains, allowing us a break from mental fatigue and a chance to reset, reboot, and restore.

Many employers have come to recognize the importance of allowing time outside to help their employees reap the benefits of time spent under the sky. Basin Electric Power Cooperative is an example of a company with a strong worksite wellness program including an onsite, one-mile walking path and an employee garden. Since 2014, over 2,200 pounds of food from the garden has been donated to community pantries, connecting employee physical health with community well-being. Other ways to bring nature to the worksite include encouraging walking meetings and adding outdoor spaces to gather and meet. Indoor atriums with natural light, green plants, and even artwork and nature photography all can add stress-relieving and productivity enhancing value to offices spaces.

Busy with the little ones at home this summer? Time in nature allows families a great reason to get away from screens and the web, providing

opportunities to experience and stretch themselves in the outdoors. My friend Jody shared a great tool that she and her two grade school children have created. They sit down at the start of summer, and after brainstorming, create a poster of all the adventures they want to tackle. She provides the stickers to add to the poster when they check each "adventure" off the list.

Such a list can include tennis lessons, horseback riding, time at the water park, a hike at Ft. Lincoln, a climb up the hill to visit Salem Sue, paddle boarding at McDowell Dam or Harmon Lake. What about setting a goal to get to every park in town before the summer is over? Visit Bismarck Parks and Recreation's website for a list of playgrounds throughout the city. Getting the little ones out gets us out, too!

Now is the time to plan to take advantage of opportunities to connect your mind and body to your community's natural spaces, reaping health benefits for you and broader benefits for your community. Be inspired by the words of American naturalist and conservationist John Burroughs: "I go to nature to be soothed and healed and to have my senses put together."

See you on the trails! *M*



Melanie lives in Bismarck with her husband, Charles, and her dog, Case. She is an author, health and wellness speaker, and grandmother of six. She loves sharing her fitness enthusiasm with others and hopes to see you in one of her cycling classes soon.

An advertisement for MagiCandle Cakery. The background is a close-up of several clear plastic jars filled with different colored sprinkles: red, green, yellow, and orange. In the top right corner, there is a logo for 'The Magic Candle Cakery' featuring a stylized candle with a face and the words 'The Magic Candle Cakery' in a script font. Below the logo, the text 'CELEBRATE ALL OF LIFE'S MOMENTS WITH A CAKE FROM MAGICANDLE!' is written in bold, red, all-caps letters. At the bottom right, the text 'MagiCandle Cakery, LLC' is followed by the address '2304 E Broadway Ave' and the phone number 'Bismarck, ND | 701.223.6242'.



Mission: Travel the World

HOW? FIRST TRAVEL YOUR HEART

by Tracie Bettenhausen | Submitted Photos

Do you have a lifelong dream you have never followed? For Tegan Henke, Wishek, North Dakota native and North Dakota State University graduate, it was world travel. So why did she wait until her late 30s to hop a plane and go?

The following is an edited, partial transcript from the podcast "Women Inspired!," created by April Seifert. April interviewed Tegan about how she made her dream of travel a reality. (The two were roommates at NDSU. Read more about April in the "Look What She Did!" section of this magazine.)

April Seifert: I wanted you on the podcast because you have been on a serious adventure. Can you share what you've been up to?

Tegan Henke: In April 2017, I quit my job and started traveling around the world. I needed to pick places that were more affordable, so I started in southeast Asia, and then went to Central and South America, and then most recently to Italy. I am now back to resuming more real world life. So maybe nine or 10 months of pretty consistent travel.

A: People go on vacation, maybe pick a place and take two weeks. But 10 months is a whole other shebang. What made you decide to launch yourself into something this big?

T: It's two-fold. One, I've always been interested in international travel, but my work life never really allowed for it (Tegan was working for a state agency

focused on mental health policy). In the United States, we get 10 vacation days a year, or maybe two weeks, and that just didn't feel long enough for me to be able to see all the places I wanted to see. And two, about five years ago I had some things happen in my life that really shook me up and sent me on this path of figuring out the person I want to be in the world. I got divorced. I'm a counselor, so I did some therapy. I was realizing that I was never really open. Whether in my marriage, or in my friendships, I didn't need anyone. I was always fine, I was always ok. That makes me very self-sufficient, but it also prevents me from having a really full life. I wasn't taking risks, personally or at work. Things were happening, and I wasn't necessarily making them happen.

A: Travel takes you out of the context that you're comfortable being in. Was it just repeated unexpected situations that just helped you get to a point where you started to break down the barriers that you discovered you had before?

T: I had an airline ticket and then did everything else on the fly. I started in Indonesia, in Bali. When I got to the airport in Dallas, they asked, 'When are you leaving Bali?' I told them I didn't really know. They told me I couldn't do that; they needed to see a ticket out. So I got on my phone and bought an outgoing ticket from Bali before I even left. Once you're in these countries, there are so many people who just want to help. If you're open to the world and

things unfolding for you, I think in a lot of ways they can. I mean, you have to be practical and safe, but the travel community is amazing. People want to help and connect.

A: How did you decide how long to stay in a certain place?

T: Some of it was I needed to stay in a certain place to meet a friend who was coming to meet me. I would have 10 days in Cambodia. So how would I divide up my days in Cambodia so I could meet my friend in Thailand on time? But sometimes if I liked a place, I'd stay longer. Or if I heard good things about a place I hadn't planned to go, I would reroute. I hadn't even planned on going to Burma (or Myanmar), but something fell through somewhere else, and so I had extra time. Turns out those were some of my favorite places.

A: Do you feel like you have a new outlook on life now?

T: I do, but not as a result of the trip. I think it's a result of everything that led up to the trip. It changed the way I interact with people, the way I take risks. Even if it's just saying something that I'm not sure if people will like. Or putting a thought out there that I haven't fully formed. People don't think of those as being risks, but they are exercises in vulnerability. I feel okay with taking risks and making mistakes. *M*

(TOP)
Sunrise after hiking to the top of Mount Batur, Bali

(BOTTOM)
The alms giving ceremony in Luang Prabang, Laos where locals give alms (usually rice) to the monks



Tracie Bettenhausen is a senior staff writer/editor at Basin Electric. She has generously opened her home to two once-foster, now-adopted kitties, Basil and Sweet Pea.



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APRIL SEIFERT

April Seifert describes her website and podcast as her "passion project."

Through her podcast, "Women Inspired!," April interviews women who are inspiring other women to live their biggest, boldest lives.

"Life is crazy short, and we only have one shot," April says. "If there is one difference between you and the people who are achieving wild goals, it's that they just started. That first step, you just take it. What I've learned doing this podcast is the more vulnerable that I've been able to be, the more easily people can connect to me."

After attending North Dakota State University, April received her Ph.D. in Social Psychology in 2007 from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and focused on studying factors that uniquely impact women, particularly women in leadership positions and positions of power.

"I am a fierce advocate for women and the inherent strength we possess. I know we are all capable of massive action and massive achievement," she says on her website. "Sometimes we just need someone to throw a little gas on our fire and show us what's possible! That's what I'm trying to do for my audience."

Recent episodes of her podcast include "How to Beat the Negativity Addiction," "Using Feng Shui to Support Your Goals," "Turning Your Struggles Into A Life of Purpose," and "Lessons from a Nomad." You can learn more about the last episode on the list in this magazine in Tracie Bettenhausen's story, "Mission: Travel the World."



HEATHER LEE

Heather Lee, instructor of special education at Minot State University, brings her experience working with people of all ages into the classroom to teach and train future leaders of the industry.

"I was taking those skills I've learned over the course of time and seeing how I can help these students be the leaders that we want them to be—to be comfortable to be able to put this service learning project together," Heather explains.

The six students in Heather's SPED 379: Leadership in Special Education course accumulated more than 300 hours of engagement in the spring semester. The class organized Minot's Teen Night Out Prom for local teens with developmental disabilities, hosted the teen group at a fun night under the university's air-supported dome, and helped collect more than 3,000 books including braille books, sign language books, audio books, and high interest books with low vocabulary.

"Part of the teacher education core is a service learning portion," Holly Pedersen says. Holly is chair of Special Education at Minot State. "It's not just random volunteering. This is a leadership class. We are trying to create, for these students who are going to be future teachers in special education, opportunities that would allow them to use those teacher leadership skills."

Heather worked throughout the semester to empower students with the skills they needed to be successful working with others and problem-solving and then let them take the lead on the projects to meet passion with purpose.



DONNA CRISTY

Lubbock, Texas born and raised Donna Cristy followed her husband to Bismarck five years ago and now can't imagine living anywhere else. Donna is a nurse practitioner working in Women's Health at Sanford, where her husband Kirk is Chief Financial Officer.

Donna is also an artist, self-taught in oils and palette knife, producing vibrantly-colorful landscapes that caught the attention of The Capital Gallery. She currently has 17 pieces on display, paired with historical artist Michael Haynes of Colorado in the gallery's "Spring Back Exhibition," showing through June at 109 N. 4th Street.

"I just love color—saturated—brilliant—and especially enjoy using a palette knife," Donna says.

Although self-taught, she feels fortunate to have been mentored by successful artists including Dreama Tolle Perry, Wilson Bickford, and Gayle Leve'e.

She and Kirk have been married over 30 years and have three grown children and four grandchildren. Donna is thrilled to have her first major exhibition in her adopted hometown and serves as a role model for others who find joy in art later in life. Waiting until their youngest child left home for college, she immersed herself in creativity. Proud of her status as a mother, grandmother, and nurse practitioner, she is now pleased to be also known as "Donna Cristy—Artist."

For more information go to thecapitalgallery.com or donnacristyfineart.com.



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REBUILD AND THEY WILL COME

**Article and Photos
by Nicole Thom-Arens**

In 1981, Paula Bachmeier was one of three women who formed the Burlington Recreation Commission so the children in the small town just west of Minot would have something to do.

“(Youth athletics) are a sense of gathering,” Paula says. “In Burlington we’re kind of a bedroom community. We’re seven miles from Minot, so a lot of people just go home, sleep, and come to work in Minot, but at least in the evenings, when we have a t-ball or a softball or a baseball game, it brings people together and they visit and meet new friends and meet new people and get acquainted and acclimated in our community.”

In the beginning, the teams played on a rock field at the school, but the commission was able to buy land through charitable gaming and built the city park.

“When we built the park, we had hundreds of people helping doing the physical work because we did it by hand ourselves,” Paula recalls.

Sports have always been a part of

Paula’s life. She coaches volleyball for United Public Schools of Des Lacs and Burlington, and even though her sons long outgrew youth baseball, Paula continued serving the community through the Burlington Recreation Commission, which provides opportunities for t-ball, baseball, and softball for about 600 youth from Burlington and surrounding communities.

“Sometimes you’ll have a group of volunteers come forward and they’re really involved when their kids are there, and then they’re gone and things kind of just die,” Paula explains. “There’s a core group of us that even though we don’t have kids in the program, we have just stayed together because we just feel it’s so important to Burlington that we keep that continuity so the rules are the same, the registration is the same. People know what’s going on when they come to join our group.”

Paula and the core group continue to organize the games and even serve as

umpires for diamond duty, as they call it.

Paula's son Christopher recently moved back to Burlington from Minnesota. He's now the superintendent of United Public Schools of Des Lacs and Burlington. Family brought him and his wife, Beth, back to the community they loved.

"My mom has always instilled in my brother and me that community is important," Christopher recalls. "Having civic pride is of great importance because we represent not only who we are but where we're from. We are Des Lacs/Burlington through and through."

Following the devastating 2011 Souris River flood, Paula lost her home and the park.

"When I saw the house, I felt like someone punched me in the stomach because it's just stuff, but when I saw our park was destroyed, I literally cried because that was built—literally built—with our own hands and our kids' hands and their friends and their parents," Paula remembers. "The building of the park and seeing it get flooded was harder for me than losing my house because we could rebuild the house, but it just took a whole village to get our park back."

The literal village came together to rebuild the park providing physical labor and the necessary funds.

"Always be a part of the 'they,'" she says. "When people say 'they' should do this, be a part of the 'they.' If you're not part of the 'they,' you shouldn't be offering your opinion. I'm happy to say in my life, I've been part of the 'they.'"

"She has shown the power of what it is to say 'yes' for the community," Christopher says. "When I tell people who I am, it's always, 'Are you Paula's son?' That's been a very prideful thing for me, and I hope that I can grow to be the type of person that somebody can someday say to her, 'Are you Christopher's mom?'" *W*



(ABOVE AND BELOW)
Submitted Photos
Cleaning up following
the 2011 flood

(LEFT)
Paula today, in the
rebuilt park



Nicole Thom-Arens is a writer and an assistant professor of communication arts at Minot State University where she teaches journalism and communication theory courses and advises the student newspaper the Red & Green.

Renae Korslien

LIFE IS FAIR

by Jody Kerzman | Photography: Rachael Neva Photo





Every summer for nine days, North Dakota State Fair Director Renae Korslien lives at the North Dakota State Fairgrounds. Literally.

"I bring my motorhome and park it right over there," she says as she points out her office window at the State Fair Center. "I've done that for 30 years, only because I'm too nosy to go home!"

Renae is a self-described people person, and it is the people that first drew her to work at the state fair. She started in the cash room back in 1974.

"We were in a little building down by the midway. Our boss was very strict—you didn't talk, you didn't play, you counted money. We started at 7 a.m. and we counted cash all day. We counted cash, itty bitty coupons, and tickets. We would sometimes take a break for lunch, I don't remember, maybe a five-minute break and by midnight we were beat, but we kept working," recalls Renae. "We did not use a calculator. We had to do our job with a pencil and paper. Can you imagine?"

Renae loved every second of those days she worked at the fair. The rest of the year, she worked part-time at a bank and helped out on the farm, a routine she continued until 1988.

"It was August, we had just finished the fair and we were all still tired. Fair manager Jerry Iverson called me up and asked me to come see him. He wanted me to come work for the fair full-time and said he had an offer I couldn't refuse. I remember telling him I didn't want a full-time job, but I agreed to go talk to him. Well, wouldn't you know, he made me an offer I couldn't refuse. He offered me \$12,000 a year. How could I say no to such a grand salary? It was huge."

GROWING THE FAIR

Renae became the director of commercial sales, which meant it was her job to bring vendors—commercial spaces, food booths, and farm equipment dealers—to the fair. It was hard work, even for a people person like Renae.

"It was a down time in the ag industry

and those dealers didn't want to come to the fair. We had moved them from the shaded area of the fair grounds to the north end on the asphalt. They were mad and said they weren't coming back," she recalls. "Even after I'd gotten them to come a couple of times, they still didn't want to spend time at the fair. They wanted their sales people on the road selling. They didn't make any sales at the fair. But I told them they needed to do this for the youth. We need to teach our young people about agriculture. They need to see that tractor, touch that combine, understand how important our famers are. So many people today don't have a touch for agriculture."

But Renae had a touch for sales. Under her leadership, the fair grew to 650 commercial exhibitors, including indoor and outdoor exhibits and food vendors. That number remains steady even today.

"That is a lot of vendors, and when I tell that to other fair directors from across the country, they can't believe it."

Renae says it's the people that keep

those vendors coming back year after year. Each summer, the fair attracts 300,000 people, which Renae says for a state the size of North Dakota, is incredible. And those North Dakotans have always made the vendors feel welcome.

"Our vendors love North Dakotans. So many of them say, 'We don't make a lot of money here, but this is like a vacation.' And so they keep coming back, and they bring their kids with them and have a little vacation at our fair."

DREAM JOB

For years, Renae not only took charge of commercial sales, she also did all the bookkeeping for the fair. Her boss, Jerry Iverson, would often tell her she couldn't continue doing both and ask her to pick one.

"He would ask me which one I liked the most and I would simply tell him, 'I like them both the most,'" says Renae. "And it was true. I loved working with the financials because I was nosy. And I loved commercial sales because I loved

“

"Our vendors love North Dakotans. So many of them say, 'We don't make a lot of money here, but this is like a vacation.'"

—Renae Korslien



Renae and
her staff



that challenge and I loved meeting new people. I love people and I got to meet new ones every year.”

Looking back, Renae says Jerry saw something in her she never saw in herself. He saw a woman who was made for the job of state fair manager.

“I would have never taken a job like this, but I love it.”

Still, it wasn’t a job Renae thought she wanted. She says she still misses commercial sales, but remember, that also was a job she didn’t think she wanted. But in 2006 when Jerry Iverson told her he planned to retire at the end of that year, she knew she didn’t want his job as fair manager. He encouraged her to apply, and Renae reluctantly did, but then told the board to hire someone else, someone younger who could do the job for 30 years like Jerry had. But by December 2009, Renae was named director of the North Dakota State Fair.

“So, here I am.”

She ran her first fair in 2010, and after one year under her belt, was gearing up

for the 2011 fair.

“It was going to be the best fair ever. We had planned it all out, sales were good, we had great acts lined up, we’d spent all our money on advertising.”

CHANGE OF PLANS

But the fair of 2011 would never happen. The Mouse River flooded—dikes were built throughout the city of Minot and on the State Fairgrounds—the State Fair Center and the newly constructed grandstand were top priority. Thousands of Minot residents lost their homes to floodwaters, and while the dikes held, the fairgrounds were in no shape for 300,000 visitors. Two weeks before the fair was scheduled to begin, Renae knew she had to cancel it.

“It was the hardest decision I’ve ever made,” remembers Renae. “Nobody cancels the fair. But we had no idea the horrible muck that was underneath. We still had water over a lot of the grounds. It was horrible.”



Mark your calendar for this year's North Dakota State Fair, scheduled for July 20-28 in Minot. Learn more at ndstatefair.com.

And visit our website for a video of Renae sharing some early memories of the fair.

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

But in 2012 Renae and the State Fair bounced back. And Renae hasn't slowed down yet. As she prepares for this year's fair, she showers praises on all her staff, calling assistant fair manager Craig Rudland her "rock."

"He makes me look good. He is the rock for me," Renae says. "The entire staff is very good to me, and together we take pride in what we do all 365 days of the year here on the fairgrounds. But the whole fair is about the people. It's about the kids, the 4-H and FFA kids. They are our future. It's up to us to mold them, and I honestly think the fair is a great place for those kids to learn."

"I often say the fairgrounds is a community. During the fair, one of my highlights each year is I can look out my office window and these kids are all outside the barn washing their cattle. And you know, it's hot in July in North Dakota, and they're on hot asphalt and the hose just happens to slip a few times and before you know it, those kids

are shooting water at each other, and they're having a great big water fight. I want so badly to join them, just once! It's incredible, and they're just so happy. We always have a few campers with the livestock people from across the state right down here and at night they pull their chairs around and just sit there and talk and laugh. It just can't get any better than that."

It is that sense of community that brings Renae so much joy, and what keeps her going on very little sleep for nine long days of the fair each summer. Renae's family has been a great support to her throughout the years. It is a life she loves, even though she never thought she would, and it is a life she wishes she could continue forever.

"I would love to do it forever and ever because that would be my wish but that wouldn't be fair to the fair. I know there will be an end someday. I can't talk about it. It's been my life."

A life that's been more than fair to Renae Korslien. *W*

To see more photos from this gallery,
go to rachaelnevaphoto.com



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WOMEN OF MEDORA:

Sponsored by the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation

Sheila Schafer

by Stephanie Fong | Photos courtesy of Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation

Women of Medora features inspiring women who have made an impact on the world through their time living and working in Medora.

If you've spent even just a little time in Medora, North Dakota, chances are you know who Sheila Schafer was. She spent decades working by her husband Harold's side to restore the history of Medora and transform it into a destination for families from across the Midwest and beyond.

Medora became a second home for Sheila, a place where she hosted an endless stream of family and friends each summer, where she took in the Medora Musical practically every other night, a town she loved and unabashedly promoted to anyone she met.

Even after Harold's death in 2001,

the "First Lady of Medora" stayed rooted there, dedicated to the cause that had meant the world to both of them. The Schafer story is woven into Medora's museums, magazines, and magic.

The public knew Sheila from her beautiful log cabin home just east of the Medora Catholic Church. She could be found sitting on her porch swing in the shade, hollering a friendly, "Hello, nice person!" to any passerby, for no other reason than to be friendly and show her appreciation for visitors that kept Medora ticking.

Visitors to the Medora Musical recognized Sheila from her enthusiastic



hollering throughout the show, cheering on her friends in the cast and relishing something she and Harold spent 50 years building together.

To those who knew her, worked with her, and enjoyed her friendship, Sheila was more than the widow of Harold Schafer. She was a force of life coming at you from a block away! The woman's spirits simply soared as she encountered the good things in life. People were drawn to her because she lifted up a room when she entered, and she showed fierce interest in just about anyone she met.

Sheila celebrated seeing people succeed. Taking a spring lunch break with volunteers and staff, you would hear her describe her amazement at how wonderful the current year's Musical cast was, or how sweet some new employees were, or how proud she was of this grandchild or that acquaintance. There was no room for negativity when there were so many things to be joyful about.

Summer employees would go out of their way to run errands for Sheila or simply stop in and visit her. She probably benefited from their company, but even more so, many of those employees overcame their own obstacles and grew confident and successful thanks to Sheila's listening ear and genuine love for them.

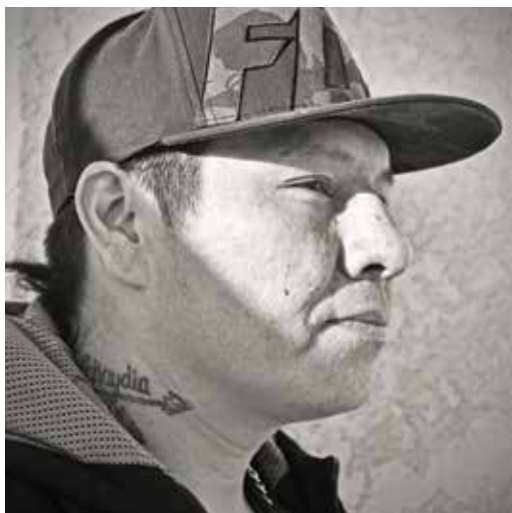
When her health started failing her in later years, and it was clear she had discomforts, she pushed on living as if to say, "I don't have time to feel sorry for myself when there are so many amazing things to do today!"

In her mid-80s, she still showed up for each employee orientation session held by the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation, lipstick applied and notes in hand. She would welcome 300 seasonal employees both old and new to Medora and give them their mission: to be like Harold in their love for Medora.

Sheila was—and still is—one of the biggest inspirations in Medora's history, making an indelible impression on the lives of Medora's visitors, performers, and employees. Her passion inspired leaders in Medora to keep dreaming bigger dreams for this little town. Her encouraging cheers made the Musical performers sing a little clearer and kick their heels up a little higher. Most importantly, the love she showed for people in her life—no matter how brief the encounter—is something none of us will ever forget. *W*



Stephanie (Tinjum) Fong worked in Medora during her college summer breaks and then had the privilege to work as the personnel manager for the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation for seven years.



A HOMELESS PROJECT: FACES & STORIES

Photos and Article by Moriah Schroeder



Editors' Note: When we heard about Moriah Schroeder's photography project, we knew we wanted to include it in this issue—it fits so perfectly with the theme "community." The following is Mo's explanation of her project, in her own words. Her inspiration, her work, and her goal.

What do you think of when you see the number 331?

Do you think of an area code?

Do you think of money?

What if I were to tell you that 311 is the number of homeless people in North Dakota? That's according to the Missouri

Valley Coalition for Homeless People.

To put that into perspective, that is the approximate population of the town McVille, North Dakota.

A big dream of mine is to travel around the 50 states and photograph homeless people and share their amazing stories. After I visit all 50 states, I would like to open a gallery with many of the photos I have taken throughout my trip.

When I attended my last class of my senior year at college, we had to focus on a community based project, also known as macro work within social work. I thought to myself, I could start



See more of Mo's work on her website,
moschroeder3.wixsite.com/mysite.

this dream of mine now in the state of North Dakota. I was able to reach out and network to a few community based organizations throughout Bismarck and ask for their help.

Ministry on the Margins was a great help. There, I was able to meet 10 individuals experiencing homelessness. I wanted to make this project very meaningful, so I asked each individual heavy questions and recorded their responses. After this, I was able to photograph each person. I wanted each picture to be a portrait, and I wanted the person being photographed to be comfortable, whether that meant not

looking at me or smiling.

Once I put my final touches on everything, I was able to hold a gallery showing at Ministry on the Margins. To my surprise, it was well attended, and I was overwhelmed with the response of the community. My main goal of this project was to open the public's eye to this reality of the homeless situation in Bismarck. *M*



Moriah Schroeder, known by her friends as Mo, graduated from the University of Mary in April with a bachelor's degree in social work. Mo worked as the head athletic photographer for U-Mary while also running her own photography business on the side.

FEEDING THE Community

Article and Photo by Pam Vukelic



I don't know what story her eyes would have told me if they hadn't been hidden behind large mirrored sunglasses, but Twila's smile was beautiful and her demeanor warm. She sat at the communal table suggesting to me she was open to chatting. And she was. Twila recently returned to Bismarck, and while she looks for a job and prepares to go to school to become a social worker, she comes to the Soup Cafe. She comes for food, and she comes for fellowship.

Soon Paul sat down beside me and wanted me to know that Mark Meier, director and founder of the Heaven's Helpers Soup Cafe, and his wife, Mary, are angels. With his voice cracking and his eyes welling up, Paul said the first thing he got the first time he walked into the Soup Cafe was a hug. This was so meaningful to Paul, he told me twice. He got emotional both times. He's living in his truck now since becoming homeless a few months ago and looks forward to the upcoming changes at the Soup Cafe. Patrons who volunteer will be able to earn Soup Cafe Bucks to use toward showers, laundry facilities, and computer access.

Heaven's Helpers Soup Cafe serves the homeless, the working the poor, the elderly, and anyone else who wants to come. It's for anyone who needs a hand up, not a hand out. As many as 250 people per day eat soup and sandwiches served by groups of volunteers who work two-hour shifts. High school students who need volunteer hours, retirees who want to feel useful, and groups looking for a service project are all welcome.

Another patron at our communal table came from work to have lunch. Rather than go for fast food he eats here and leaves what he would have spent at a restaurant in the donation box. Not that a restaurant experience would be that

much different. Once you choose your seat, a waitress comes to take your order. You are welcome to go to the dessert bar where there are numerous sweets and fresh fruits from which to choose.

As you leave, you're welcome to help yourself to bags of bagels, bread, rolls, crackers, and even pizza sauce. The food might have been delivered to the Soup Cafe by the Great Plains Food Bank, picked up from several restaurants, or dropped off by someone who had leftovers after a funeral meal.

Dining at **The Banquet**, another free meal option in Bismarck, gave me a look at our community that I don't typically see in my routine comings and goings. I stood in line at Trinity Lutheran Church on a Thursday evening waiting for the doors to open. The aroma of roasted chicken filled the air. Some guests came with salon-coifed hair; some came with all their worldly possessions on their backs. Some came on bicycles; some in Cadillacs. Some were old; some were young. Some were physically able; some not so much. Some came with tote bags tucked into their back pockets.

Like parts of a smoothly-oiled machine, The Banquet volunteers know just what to do—counting heads to be sure no seats are left empty. The troop of servers goes into action delivering, on this evening, roasted chicken breast, mashed potatoes with gravy, corn, rolls, salad, fruit, cookies, and milk. It was delicious! The crew working this shift came from Corpus Christi Catholic Church. A multi-piece band played familiar melodies.

Heaven's Helpers Soup Cafe

220 N 23rd St

Monday through Friday – 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Saturday – 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sign up to volunteer soupcafe.org

Grand Re-Opening June 2

The Banquet

Trinity Lutheran Church

502 N 4th Street

Tuesday and Thursday – 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Saturday – 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Sign up to volunteer bismarckbanquet.com

As the guests left, they were welcome to crack out their tote bags and pick up a few items on the "to-go" table. Lots of bread products, fresh fruit, cereal, crackers, cookies, and donuts were available. In addition, "to-go" plates are prepared with any food not served during the meal. There is also a rack where give-away clothing is available.

I remember being surprised, in visiting with friends about a year ago, at how many volunteer activities they were involved in. I wasn't surprised by their generosity but by the need there is in the Bismarck community. These are just two examples of wonderful services and opportunities for social interaction. Regardless of your status in life, you're welcome at both of these places. Checking them out will enrich your life. *W*



Having just retired from more than two decades of teaching, Pam looks forward to having more time to play with grandchildren, more time to read and write, and more adventures with her husband, Jim.

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Gather at the Table

READERS' RECIPES

ARKANSAS GREEN BEANS

Start to finish: 55 minutes

Servings: 15-20

Submitted by: Angela Sabot, Bismarck, ND

I found this on nancycreative.com via Pinterest. She found it on allrecipes.com. This recipe is amazing. I first made it for a tailgating get-together, and I got so many compliments on it. One guy actually told me he doesn't like green beans, but he couldn't stop eating these. I converted a green bean hater!

- 5 15-ounce cans green beans, drained (I've also substituted a couple cans of wax beans for a little variety in color.)
- 12 slices bacon, cooked until slightly crispy, then cut into large pieces
- 2/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- 7 teaspoons soy sauce (or 2 tablespoons + 1 teaspoon)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons garlic powder

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place the drained green beans in a 9x13 baking pan. Sprinkle with cooked bacon pieces. Combine the sugar, butter, soy sauce, and garlic powder in a small bowl. Pour over the green beans and bacon. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes. Remove from oven and serve.

(Note: I've successfully made these several times in a foil pan on the grill.)

Angela is a recipe book collector and shares her favorite recipes on her blog fivefootfoodie.com

We tried it! It only took 55 minutes to make. We saved time using the WowBacon microwave maker (available at Karmin's Kitchen Table). There was enough time to walk around the block before supper, and the beans were a HUGE hit! Super easy and perfect for potluck meals, barbecues and tailgating. —KKT



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GARRISON-MAX AMBULANCE

HEART OF A COMMUNITY

by Marci Narum | Photography: Rachel Neva Photo



When people in a small town rally, it's usually around a cause that will improve the quality of life on some level for an individual, a family, or the entire community. Residents in the town of Garrison, North Dakota are pulling together for an even higher purpose: to save more lives.

The town is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts. It draws hunters, anglers, campers, boaters—tourists in general—year-round. Accidents and medical emergencies are bound to happen. The Garrison-Max Ambulance District has to be prepared for anything.

"We do have a quality service," says Sandra Nelson, ambulance district board president and certified EMT. "I feel very proud to be on the board and also part of the medical staff, because if this community didn't have an ambulance, you'd have to rely on Minot or Underwood or even Bismarck for care. And when it's something so urgent that you need that immediate response, we would probably have a higher mortality rate."

"You'd have to wait for an ambulance for a long time," ambulance district co-manager Amanda Melby adds. "It could be

a life or death situation for sure. If someone is having a heart attack or stroke, time is muscle, so you need definitive care sooner rather than later. Every second counts."

That's why, when Amanda and her husband, Logan, and their three girls moved from Bismarck to Garrison two years ago, she started the process of making it a Cardiac Ready Community (CRC). In 2016, the North Dakota Division of EMS and Trauma partnered with the American Heart Association to offer the CRC program through the North Dakota Cardiac System of Care. The designation means people living in a community are prepared to respond and assist if an individual has a cardiac event. The goal is to improve the chance for survival in those situations.

"Six other communities in the state are Cardiac Ready Communities," Amanda shares. "We have our letter of intent into the state and there are certain criteria you have to meet to become a CRC."

Among those criteria: teaming up with the local hospital, fire, and police; garnering support from business owners, training community members in hands-only CPR, and providing education and

(LEFT)
Amanda Melby,
Garrison-Max
Ambulance
District co-
director

(RIGHT)
Amanda with her
daughters, five-
year-old Avery
and three-year-
old twins Landry
and Kendall





prevention programs such as blood pressure screenings. Plus, the community is required to have Automated External Defibrillators (AED) where the public can access them in an emergency.

"The public access AED is a huge thing our community wants to see happen; to have them in every church and the grocery store. We've had people have heart attacks in these public places where access to an AED would have been potentially lifesaving," Amanda shares.

The Garrison-Max ambulance crew has 28 people on staff, plus volunteers from the fire department. Amanda says of those, four are paramedics and three are full-time EMTs, bringing more than 100 years of experience in EMS. The district is also recognized as a Pediatric Prepared Ambulance.

"It means we are the best possibly prepared for a pediatric patient," says Amanda, buckling her daughter Kendall into an ambulance seat. "We have the training and the equipment, and we hold public events geared toward kids. I will be trained as a car seat technician, so I can do car seat checks in the community."

The experience and opportunities

for training have made the Garrison-Max Ambulance District a learning hub. Amanda says it is known as a regional training center.

"We are one of the only training centers in our region. Ninety percent of our employees are all instructors, so we can hold and teach any course anybody needs, whether that's law enforcement, the fire department, EMS personnel, daycare providers, or teachers."

The ambulance crew trained and certified 181 Garrison High School students this year and taught basic first aid to teachers and coaches. Camp counselors and state park employees are next. That should just about cover the community.

"It's our nature to help people," says Amanda. "If I've got family and friends living here and something happens to one of them, especially with how rural the community is, I want to make sure they have the best chance possible to survive. Garrison is a nice little community and everyone is so tight-knit and looks out for each other."

It's a community that rallies. And when a community rallies, its heart grows stronger. *M*

(LEFT)
Sandra Nelson
(left) and Amanda
Melby inside one
of the ambulance
district's four rigs

(RIGHT)
Staff members of
the Garrison-Max
ambulance—
advanced EMT
Roger Heinle,
Garrison; EMT
Dawn Lakoduk,
Velva; EMT Sandra
Nelson, and
paramedic/co-
manager Amanda
Melby



The North Dakota EMS Association
named the Garrison-Max
Ambulance Service
"Southwest Region
Ambulance Service of the Year"

OH MAN

BISMARCK POLICE CHIEF DAN DONLIN

by Jody Kerzman | Submitted Photos

Dan Donlin grew up playing cops and robbers. But the Bismarck, North Dakota native never expected that childhood game would have such an impact on his future career.

"I thought I'd be a CPA. I liked math, but when I flunked tax class, I figured I better find a different career," he recalls with a laugh.

He switched his major to business and after a short sales career, Dan applied with the Highway Patrol and the Bismarck Police Department.

"I applied with the Highway Patrol,

and in 1992, moved to detectives. He began as a property crimes investigator and after a few years was investigating personal crimes—including stalking and rapes. Dan slowly worked his way up to sergeant, then lieutenant, deputy chief, and on January 20, 2013, Dan was named Chief of Police.

A DAY'S WORK

Chief Donlin says he feels blessed to have spent his entire career—his entire life, in fact—in Bismarck.

"This is my roots, this is where my family is," he explains. "Bismarck just has a very nice environment to grow up in and to work in. I considered applying in a bigger city when I first became a police officer, but I decided to stay here because my thought was, 'I don't want to work for a big agency and get shot at everyday.'"

Ironically, that's exactly what happened to Dan in August 2003, while working in Bismarck. After a 14-hour standoff with police, Dan shot and killed 27-year-old Michael Sherman. Sherman and 19-year-old Brandon Keller held police at bay in an armed standoff in a south Bismarck mobile home. The North Dakota Attorney General ruled Dan was justified in shooting Sherman, but the event forever changed him.

"That standoff was the biggest event that occurred in my career, as far as the psychological and emotional impact."

SHARING THE SPOTLIGHT

July 8, 2011 was another emotional day for Dan. That's the day Bismarck Police Sergeant Steve Kenner was shot and killed while responding to a domestic violence call.

“

"I thought I'd be a CPA. I liked math, but when I flunked tax class, I figured I better find a different career."—Dan Donlin

but I didn't even get an interview," says Dan. "God works in mysterious ways, I guess."

Dan did get an interview with the Bismarck Police Department, as well as a job offer. His sister Colleen, who worked for the department for more than 30 years, told Dan he was number one on the list when he applied.

"But when they did a background check and saw all my speeding tickets, they moved me to the bottom of the list!" Dan laughs. "I was hired on August 16, 1988. I literally started at the bottom."

He started as a patrol officer. After two years on the job, he joined the SWAT team,

"Steve was a friend, and I miss him everyday."

This July, Dan will get a chance to honor Sgt. Kenner's memory, as he is honored at a Bismarck Larks baseball game.

"They came to me with the idea of doing a 'Chief Donlin Appreciation Night.' I told them that was absolutely ridiculous and unnecessary, but then I realized it would be a good way to honor law enforcement as a whole, not just me. We chose the game on July 8, the anniversary of the day we lost Sgt. Kenner. I hope we can focus on his memory and honor him.

"I'm very honored but I am also very humbled and slightly embarrassed that all this attention is focused on me. I don't need that. There are a lot of people out there working hard and risking their lives everyday. That's where I want the focus to be."

PROTECTING HIS CITY

For the past 30 years, Dan has been focused on making Bismarck a safe place to live. He's seen his beloved city change; he admits it isn't the same as even a decade ago.

"It is a lot busier. My advice is that you need to have that big city attitude toward safety. By that I mean being aware of your surroundings. Not being paranoid, but paying closer attention to people, and keeping a closer eye on your children and your property," he explains. "We've always had crimes in Bismarck but with the media and social media we are much more aware of them now."

Dan has many career highlights—some funny, some sad. But the ones he holds closest to his heart are the ones where he's had a positive impact on someone.

"Sometimes you see that positive right away, and sometimes it takes 20 years. I've had people come back to me and say, 'I hated you back then, but now I'm clean, I'm sober—thank you!' Anytime I could be there for parents or kids when they were injured or scared, I felt good about the work I was doing."

Now it's time to let someone else do that work. Dan has announced his



Chief Donlin emceeing the 2017 Special Olympics North Dakota Softball Championships



Dan during SWAT training at Camp Grafton in 2003



Dan on patrol in the early 90s

retirement; his last day at the police department will be August 17.

"I could keep working. I do enjoy the work, and I love the people I work with. But the time is right for me to retire and find another job. It's exciting, but I've also got a little apprehension. It's going to be a big change. For 30 years I've been waking up everyday and doing this. But I'm excited for what's next. I want to keep giving to the community, it will just be in a different capacity." *W*

HERE THEY COME: COMMUNITY READY STUDENTS

by Renae Walker | Submitted Photos



A promise built into the Bismarck Public School's (BPS) mission is that "All students will have the academic, social, and personal skills to be... community ready." But what does "community ready" really mean? Can readiness for life in the community be measured?

By October 2018, BPS will define the citizenship goal more specifically, as well as present measures of it for school board approval or redirection. But students and teachers are already taking steps toward community readiness. Here are just a few examples:

- Many elementary schools focus on a theme each month about caring for people and giving back to the community. Even little ones can practice the selflessness of good citizenship.

- All schools participate in one or more giving programs around the winter holiday season.
- All teachers are asked to conduct at least one Project-Based Learning (PBL) unit annually. Students present their projects to an authentic audience—people like you!
- All schools have student councils.
- Many students, fifth graders through seniors in high school, participate in career fairs and/or take career interest inventories. Job shadowing and mentorship experiences are offered for credit to high school students.
- The Career Academy has piloted an innovative and award winning Career Ready Practices report card which reports skills such as teamwork, listening, communicating, technical skills, and being a responsible employee.
- Students must pass a state civics exam before graduating. BPS students can start taking it in seventh grade; 80 percent of them pass the exam by eighth grade.
- High school students take at least three credits of social studies.
- At the BPS Career Academy and Tech Center, students may take career related courses in everything from aviation to welding. Many courses are articulated with Bismarck State College for college credit.
- Leadership clubs and courses abound at the middle and high school including leadership, peer to peer mentoring, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), and more.

These are just a few examples—visit inspiredwonanonline.com for even more examples of how kids are becoming community ready. *W*



Renae Hoffmann Walker is a Bismarck native and has enjoyed many years as Community Relations Director at Bismarck Public Schools. She and her husband Dwayne are river rats, empty nesters, and seasoned travelers.

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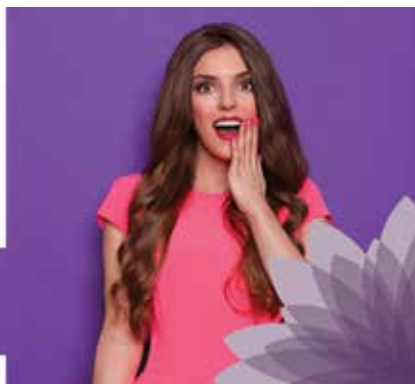
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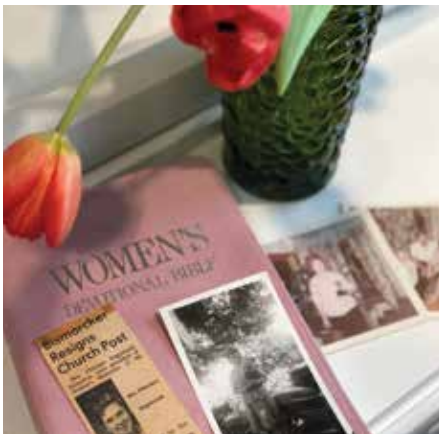


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GIVING BACK & GETTING INVOLVED

by Michelle Farnsworth | Submitted Photos



Growing up I thought my lifestyle was how everyone lived: church, volunteer, give, repeat. My grandmother Florence Johnson Engstrand was an Assembly of God minister. She was a trailblazer. Her father, Thure, was also a minister; her mother, Agnes, devoted her entire life to their ministries.

My grandmother was also a missionary with her work at the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. She also supported mission work around the world. We always had missionaries visiting. We prepared for their visits by collecting food, clothing, and supplies to load up and be delivered to those in need. In those days, monetary donations were hard to come by.

I really didn't know any different. My childhood was spent helping at church events, going to nursing homes, helping my grandparents with church services, and helping with my grandpa's handyman clients. Those were some of my most precious memories. (If you have never volunteered with older folks; it's a blessing and entertainment!)

And my Pappa, Arnold Engstrand? Well his giving and doing for others was epic. A contractor by trade and a handyman, he also worked tirelessly for the church and all of his clients. From driving the church Sunday school bus and rounding up children to get on the bus to attend Sunday school, to the right-hand of his wife.

As the husband of a small-town pastor, Pappa did it all. Building, cleaning, repairing, rescuing people and animals, and—oh yeah—raising their family of four children.

I am the fourth generation, and my role models were the ultimate. To this day I have yet to meet a power couple like my grandparents. I think of them each day. I know they guide my path, and their legacy leads me to create my own path of giving.

I could rattle on and on about all the giving my grandparents did while receiving no fanfare or accolades. Why am I sharing their story of loving and giving to others?

I realized something so important: giving back is what life is all about. It's for sure been imprinted on my heart, and I try my best to do and give when I can. Community awareness and giving is vital, especially when the world can be so cruel and lashes back.

But as a whole, I believe people are good, and most people want to do good and help others. Not sure how to start? Start small. Hold the door open for the person behind you, pick up the trash you see as you walk across the parking lot, offer a smile to a stranger. Then, when you're ready, choose an organization that's near and dear to your heart and see what they may need. It doesn't have to be monetary. And your process doesn't need to be public. Show your family what it means to give back and get involved. It will be the greatest gift you can pass down. *M*



Michelle Farnsworth is a local writer and owner of her own Younique Makeup and Skincare business. Two humans, one fur baby, and her husband, Richard, occupy her free time.

Florence and Arnold Engstrand on their wedding day, May 29, 1942

Agnes Johnson, Michelle's Great Grandmother

Four generations: Michelle Farnsworth, Florence Engstrand, Agnes Johnson, and Donna Hardt

"Pappa" Engstrand fixing one more detail

Arnold and Florence Engstrand

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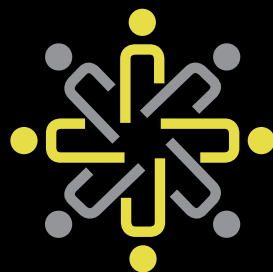
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COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTOR

COMMUNITY BLESSINGS
Submitted Photos



"Give freely without begrudging it, and the Lord your God will bless you in everything you do. There will always be some among you who are poor. That is why I am commanding you to share your resources freely with the poor and others in need."

Deuteronomy 15:10-11



You could say that verse is Theresa Stockert's guide to life. Since 2010, she's been operating her secondhand store, Community Blessings, full-time and blessing the communities of Bismarck and Mandan on a daily basis. She shares more about the store and her mission.

TELL US A LITTLE HISTORY OF COMMUNITY BLESSINGS.

My dream has always been to help people in need, but I used to believe that could only be done overseas. I thought that was how God was calling me, but as I looked around I saw there is so much need right around us in our own community. I may not be able to mend the world, but I can help right here in Bismarck and Mandan. From the very beginning I knew I wanted sell the donations at a reasonable price so that anyone could afford to have beautiful items, no matter their income.



HOW ARE YOU DIFFERENT FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS LIKE YOURS?

Community Blessings believes that all people deserve nice things. We all deserve to have our practical needs met. Items like a bed, clothes, shoes, dishes, bedding, towels, and soap are items that make life a little easier. We pride ourselves with the best donations and we treat all items with respect and make sure they are cleaned and cared for. We send items to smaller communities. Making lots of money is not the goal, but we do need to pay the bills and that is the goal every week. We are not just a shop for needy families though; all are welcome. We have people from all different incomes. We not only offer material items but also fellowship and kindness.

WHAT ARE YOUR NEEDS RIGHT NOW IF SOMEONE WOULD LIKE TO HELP?

We are always looking for donated items and volunteers.

HOW CAN PEOPLE DONATE OR GET INVOLVED?

I have a crew of the best volunteers who help me run the store Wednesday-Friday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. To donate or volunteer, call me at 701-425-8837 or find us on Facebook. We are located at 312 Bis-Man Ave in Mandan, across from McDonalds. We are always accepting donations. Large furniture and kitchen and bathroom items go quickly. *M*



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 1-3	Rug Rat Softball Tournament
June 2	Tractor Trek
June 2	Carz-n-Cures
June 9	Volkowitsch Golf Open
June 10	Bismarck Bloody Mary Fest
June 16	Harleywood Night Motorcycle Run
June 20	BCC Night at the Bismarck Larks
June 25	Survivor Picnic
July 4	Mandan Road Race

A SARATOGA WAY OF LIFE: *In the Backstretch*

by Carole Hemingway | Submitted Photos

Saratoga's main attraction has always been its world-class thoroughbred race horses. The town's signature race course opened on August 3, 1863, just a month after the Battle of Gettysburg. The blood on the battlefield was barely dry, and cannon fire still echoed in the hills, a sobering reminder of a conflict that seared and scarred a precious piece of the American landscape. I believe the Saratoga Race Course's opening day was the first step to healing our country.

My first adventure to Saratoga was the last week in August 2010, to see Rachael Alexandra run in the PERSONAL ENSIGN. I met her face to face at dawn on the morning of her race. There's nothing like a horse's nose on your shoulders; it's the best medicine on earth for whatever ails you. When I first laid eyes on the beautiful Rachel Alexandra, the \$10 million horse of the year, I was captured by her sheer size and the grace in which she carried her beauty. She is a half a ton of sunshine. Feeling the magical tickle of her nose against my shoulders, the stimulation of her warm breath across my neck was about as good as it gets.

After that introduction, I thought to myself, "What could possibly compare with that moment?" I soon found out. The Backstretch. It's what goes on behind the scenes that brings out those magnificent thoroughbreds to the starting gate. And only a few even get to see it up-close and personal. This was my lucky day. The Backstretch is a dizzying place of activity where six weeks of summer racing season starts

the end of July, continues through Labor Day, and finds 800 workers—from many foreign cultures—managing to wrangle 1,800 horses in 91 barns. You've got to respect that.

These men often only get to see home and their families during the holiday season of winter and send their families money to provide for, among other things, their children's education. This life is tough and really hard on the men, but it's the way they have to do their jobs. They often live in dorms on the track grounds. They save their money. It may not be the most comfortable way to live, but somehow it works.

Sleep is a valued commodity—the men start waking up the horses at 5 a.m., and typically, the men wake up about 15 minutes before the horses, which barely gives them enough time to roll out of bed, still sleepy-eyed, and walk to their respective barns. The Backstretch Employees Service offers free breakfasts to all workers at Saratoga Springs Backstretch areas. Because many of the workers come from foreign countries and have no form of transportation while working at Saratoga, their food options are limited to what's served at the track or what can fit on a hot plate. This is their only healthy food option. Candy vending machines are always empty.

The idea for the "health food program" came about after a Backstretch worker visited a dentist, who prescribed an antidote that required a full stomach. Much of the time the workers had no food in their dorms, so they were taken by a nonprofit shuttle service to

a local grocery store, other local supermarkets, and Walmart twice a week. Then along came volunteers and donations for their own food service, and they were able to offer free hot meals six days a week.

The breakfasts extended to lunches and popular dessert options such as pie. All of this has given the men the energy to keep working because they get balanced meals. It is estimated that 5,000 meals are served throughout the racing season. Other services offer a computer center equipped with Skype so workers can communicate with their families back home, whom they likely won't see again until December.

There's also a free store where workers can pick up clothing and other supplies such as jeans, which are obviously popular, and a health care clinic staffed with doctors. There are Sunday dinners, Bingo nights, and even karaoke nights throughout racing season. As you can tell by reading this, there's an outpouring of community support creating a Backstretch employee package that surpasses other race tracks. Help and support is why these horse racing events can take place, and as someone famous once said: "It indeed takes a village." *M*



Rachel Alexandria and her jockey, Calvin Borel



Two men hard at work in Saratoga Springs



Carole Hemingway is an internationally regarded author, speaker, astrologer, and historical researcher. She lives along the coast of Maine, where she is currently writing three books on Gettysburg. The first volume is expected to be released in November 2018.

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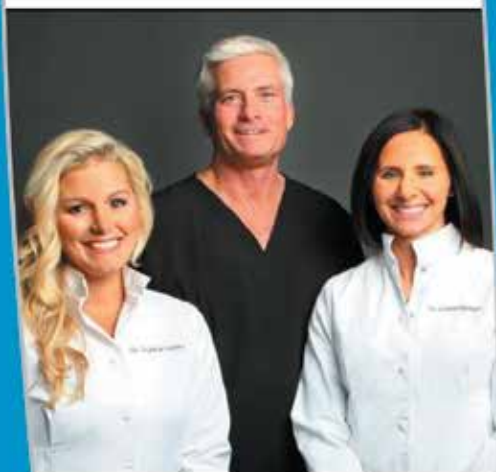
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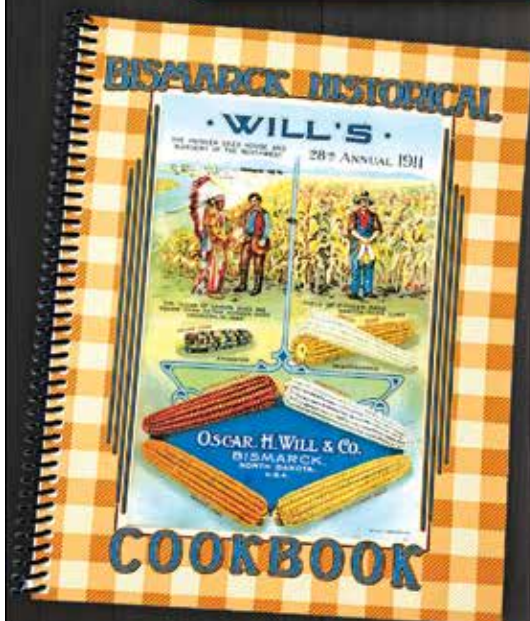
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Susanne Mattheis
passed away in 2007.

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