



FROM THE PUBLISHER’S DESK

BY KELSEY MAJESKE

Main Street magic for the holiday win



For those of you following along, winter has arrived - the cold, blustery, under-constant-threat-of-a-snowstorm version. For the third time in three weeks, my travel plans have been thwarted by the wintry rain-sleet-snow mix that keeps appearing every three to five business days.

While a normal inconvenience, it generally is a nice excuse to be stuck at home to work and catch up on what I have inevitably put on the back burner. Unfortunately, these early season storms have put a real damper on my favorite time of year to travel to our various small towns. I’m missing the Holiday Walk Arounds, the festive Christmas gatherings, and the sheer beauty of our small downtowns covered in that light, sparkly, Christmas-card snow.

Worst of all, the weather has put me so far behind on my holiday shopping that my normally well-thought-out Christmas gifts are being replaced with whatever I can find where I am. For me, this time of year isn’t just about the destination of a wrapped gift; it’s about the process. It’s about taking the time to truly match a personality to a perfect item. Instead of stressing about the details, I try to stop and enjoy the entire sensory experience...of preparing for the holidays: the smells of Christmas, the sound of holiday music wafting through the shops, the warmth of coffee thawing my freezing hands.

This preparation, the baking, the decorating, and, yes, the thoughtful shopping, is the very thing that makes the season feel special, not just a frantic dash to December 25th. It’s in these moments that the spirit of the season truly settles in.

One of the perks of my job, if you will, is the many towns across the Dakotas that I travel to, allowing me to spend time in the small downtown boutiques and shops that support our local newspapers. Often, they allow me to find the unique gifts that I wouldn’t otherwise find because they simply don’t come to mind. When you shop in a small business, you aren’t just selecting from a curated list of top-selling items; you are benefiting from the owner’s own personal taste and passion. The items are often handcrafted, ethically sourced, or

simply a one-of-a-kind novelty. What truly enhances the experience is that many of the small downtowns I visit are decorated to the hilt for the holidays, some even adorned with speakers playing classic Christmas music throughout downtown to really pull in the nostalgia of small-town shopping.

Don’t get me wrong, I, like many millennials, have a possibly severe online shopping addiction, so much so that the UPS truck spends about as much time at my house as he does parked at the shop this time of year. Boxes arrive, and it is anyone’s guess what is in them at this point. I do, however, try to leave my Amazon shopping for the basic things that I know I need and take zero creativity or thought: the larger wanted toys, electronics, and those necessities that are always on sale this time of year. I leave the fun, memorable part of my shopping to our small businesses: Kitchen gadgets for Mom that a local retailer actually tested and loves. Boutique clothing for my daughter and niece that won’t be identical to what every other kid is wearing. Gift knick-knacks for friends and family, the more of an oddity or charming eccentricity I find, the better the gift.

There is something simply better, more satisfying, and more Christmassy about holiday shopping in person, with bags in hand, while the weather is chilly and there is the crisp, satisfying crunch of snow on the ground. More importantly, when I shop small, I know my dollars are going directly back into the community, keeping the lights on in that beautiful downtown space I love so much.

This year, the weather is putting up a fight to keep everyone home and bundled up in the warmth of their houses, but we have all winter for that, after all, winter is three-quarters of the year around here! If you can get out and shop our small towns, please do! I will be crunching as many visits as I can into the next two weeks as soon as this current ice-wind storm passes through, and these small businesses need all of us to support them this season so that they can continue to be here for Christmases to come!

Back in the day

Underwood

COMPILED BY SHELLY WALLACE
from the Files of the Central McLean News Journal

20 years ago, Dec. 2005

Rick Anderson of Coleharbor was presented the North Dakota Water Wheel Award during the 42nd Annual Joint North Dakota Water Convention and Irrigation Expo, Dec. 7 and 8 in Bismarck.

It’s an annual tradition, just like Christmas cards in December, but these holiday greetings come from the county treasurer’s office. It’s the annual real estate tax notices. The 2005 statements were mailed out to taxpayers the week of Dec. 5, and some taxpayers will see a slight increase partly due to added funding requests from county schools.

Sara Loose and Matthew Knutson, with their parents, Loren and Deborah Loose, Underwood, and Brian and JoMarie Knutson, Sherwood, announce their forthcoming marriage.

McLean County and the Fort Berthold Reservation were among the entities listed in the Presidential Disaster Declaration worth \$2.2 million. The declaration is resulting from the impact of the record-breaking early snowstorm that moved through portions of North Dakota Oct. 4-6.

He might be out of his element coming from the plains of North Dakota, but you would never know it by the success Trevor Saylor, a 1997 graduate of Underwood High School, has found in the mountains of Virginia.

Trevor has been competing in mountain bike racing, a sport hugely popular in that region of the country. In two short years, he has moved up the competitive ladder and is now competing at the pro-expert level.

The Underwood Comet girls took a couple of tough losses on the hard court, one not so unexpected (a 66-30 loss to New Town), and one the Comets had planned on winning (the surprise 53-47 loss to Washburn).

Underwood’s boys split their first two games on the hard court this season, losing their season opener to a home-standing New Salem team 71-44 Friday night, then following up with a bounce-back win over Burke County, winning by the score of 43-33.

Torin Kolke’s 12 points paced the Comets against New Salem, while Jake Hultberg added 10 points. Against Burke County, it was Jeremy Brandle and Andrew Hefta leading the way with 14 and 12 points, respectively, as the Comets knocked down more points from the paint.

30 years ago, Dec.1995

The Dan Leidholm, Bob Krumwiede and Tom Hoff families were the winners of the outdoor Christmas lighting contest.

Underwood High School students, Kelly Snyder, Krist Kjelstrup and Brian Bohem spearheaded the efforts,

and other students helped out, with putting up new basketball backboards. The backboards were purchased with donations.

Winners in the Underwood Civic Club sponsored Christmas Merchant Buck drawing were Betty Fischer, Heidi Strom and Kathy Landenberger.

45 years ago, Dec. 1980

It took a couple calls before Mary Blotske recognized her name as the big winner in the Underwood Civic Club’s shopping spree Saturday, culminating in a four-week Christmas promotion. Because she was present at the drawing, the \$400 in Merchant Bucks automatically became \$500 to spend at city businesses. Nancy Strong and Martha Ash won giant Christmas stockings.

“I’ve got a broken heart this Christmas,” said Nellie Jans, choking back her tears. Jans lost a son, a niece and a friend of the family in a fire that gutted her rural Mercer home within minutes, Dec. 18.

K.C. Snyder, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jay Snyder, was 6 years old on Monday, and for the occasion, his grandmother, Mrs. Harold Snyder, baked a birthday cake and brought it to his home for a party.

55 years ago, Dec. 1970

District 8, or McLean County, legislators have been named to several posts for the forthcoming assembly. Sen. Dave Robinson is on the appropriations committee. Rep. Don Giffey is on the education and transportation committees. Rep. Paul Patrick is on the state and federal government committee. Leo Leidholm will again serve as secretary of the senate.

The president’s honor roll at Minot State College for the fall quarter of 1970 was announced. Underwood students, Janeen Norland and Linda Hoppe, made the list.

The first meeting of the newly reorganized Lewis and Clark Trail Council was held recently in Bismarck. The council was recently expanded to include a representative from each county that is part of the original Lewis and Clark Trail. Mrs. Dave Robinson, Coleharbor, is one of the members at large.

Mrs. Dallas Benzmilller entertained her canasta club. Honors were won by Mrs. Gary Repnow, Mrs. Cary Johnson and Mrs. Gary Miller.

Pvt. Steve Berg arrived here to spend the Christmas and New Year holidays with his parents, the Emil Bergs. Steve is in the army and has just completed basic training at Fort Lewis, Wash.

65 years ago, Dec. 1960

James Essig, an employee of the Northwestern Bell Telephone Co. is now stationed in Underwood as a serviceman and troubleshooter for the local exchange. For the present, he is

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P.O. Box 573, Underwood, ND 58576 • 701-462-8126 • USPS #647540
email centralmclean@nordaknorth.com • website nordaknorth.com
Ethyn Williams-Calvert..... Editor
Shelly Wallace Sales Representative
Jackie Kohler..... Production

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