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— Miriam Pico’ Spokesperson
OUR KIDDOS GOT A TASTE OF THE BUSINESS WORLD

at our February GTW Luncheon. Nelson, age 11, and Brook, age 10, set up a table to sell restaurant coupons as a fundraiser for their 5th grade trip to Leelanau Outdoor Center (LOC). We enjoyed watching our two mini-entrepreneurs try their hand at business, and they learned a few things along the way. This is how it went down:

THE PRESENTATION

Their booth was simple. White tablecloth, handwritten signs (with only one misspelling). They were going for “authentic 5th grader” and they nailed it. We resisted getting involved with computer-generated graphics or spelling lessons. They were on their own and it was interesting to see them scratch things out, having never even heard of Wite-Out. They were earning their stripes, as they say. We also liked how they had made a million signs for a six-foot table. As they whirled down their inventory to the best, the scratched-out sign went into the trash. Five minutes in and they’d already upped their game.

THE PRODUCT

They were selling coupons and, well, they had no curb appeal. What they needed was something tangible and immediate. Hence, the homemade cookies, one free with each sale. A stroke of genius. Women far and wide came to see what the bake sale was all about. Sure, half of them bailed when they realized the cookies weren’t for sale, but the kids were drawing a crowd. (Next lesson: Women never even heard of Wite-Out. They were earning their stripes, as they say.) We also liked how they had made a million signs for a six-foot table. As they whirled down their inventory to the best, the scratched-out sign went into the trash. Five minutes in and they’d already upped their game.

why “loc.”

Who goes on the trip? “Westwoods.”

The kids had only two answers but they effectively answered every single question thrown at them. They were not to be deterred, and they repeated themselves 26 times without worry. The women put them through the wringer, teaching them more about public speaking (and short answers) than business school could in four years.

THE CLOSER

We found ourselves hanging out by their table, waiting to see which of our friends would break them and show them the cruel, cruel world of business.

That’s when one gal came up to buy coupons (get a cookie) and found she only had $9 in her purse. A dollar short! Would she haggle the kids for a discount? Would she start the “check was in the mail” rundown? Would she walk away and dash their hopes?

None of the above.

She offered them a $5 donation to LOC, they offered her a cookie, and she left with a smile on her face and a pat on the back for each of them.

“oh dear, we thought, had she ruined them? Would they expect nice people like this the rest of their lives now?”

But we didn’t worry long. We realized that, while we’ve had some bad experiences over the years, most of the women we know are the $5 kind.

Last lesson, kiddos: Always do business with good women, kind women… and women who love cookies.
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MY GRANDMOTHER worked for herself. She was a hair stylist in a salon. Every time she needed a little extra cash she would go to the refrigerator, open up the vegetable crisper, unroll a piece of foil and take out a $20 bill. We always called it “Nanny’s cold cash.” This also may have been the extent of her retirement planning, other than her Social Security check every month.

In the Detroit neighborhood where I grew up in the ’70s, it seemed like everyone else’s parents were set for life with pensions from their jobs with the Big Three (Ford, General Motors and Chrysler). My dad, though, was a small business owner—an independent insurance adjuster with four branches in Michigan—so he did not have a pension to look forward to. I was always well aware that there was not going to be anybody waiting with a monthly check for him at the other end of his career.

It turns out that my dad and my grandmother were ahead of their time. As a certified financial planner, I have watched the retirement landscape evolve. Now I know that about 80 percent of Americans work for small businesses with fewer than 100 employees. And today, 50 percent of working Americans have no pension, or defined benefits plan.

Pensions are now the exception, not the rule. People who were hired at General Motors after 1993 no longer have pension plans. Even the biggest corporations in America, like ITW and Citigroup, do not have pension plans. Generally the only people with pensions these days are municipal workers, such as those at police and fire departments, governmental employees and teachers—and even this is changing.

Most of us working Americans today have to save the money for our retirement on our own. Companies we work for may help a little bit. Businesses tend to put matching funds (often 4 percent) into a 401(k) or a retirement plan for their employees, which these employees take with them when they leave. For the most part, however, workers have to design their own paycheck in retirement. We aim to get to the end of working life with—we hope—a nest egg.

Exactly how do we create a “pension” for ourselves with this money? How can we feel sure that our little nest egg will last as long as we do?

I help people prepare by finding ways to utilize their money in a less risky approach so that these clients will not run out of their nest egg no matter how long they live. Only when they feel confident in the plan can they take the next step into retirement.
Though it sounds like the easiest thing in the world to many people, actually taking that step and retiring can be difficult. Not only are people at that point no longer contributing to their retirement account; they are also starting to draw from it—it's a double whammy.

If you’ve been a saver and have always contributed 10 percent from your paycheck into a savings account, it can be psychologically and emotionally tough to start pulling 5 percent out of your accounts every month and using it to live on. In fact, some people can’t do it. I had one client who wanted to go back to work after about a year because she was used to seeing the balances go up; she could not handle seeing them come down.

To be able to feel secure in retirement, you also need to make sure that you are in a relationship with a financial planner you really trust. Don’t settle for someone who just says, “Trust me; it’s all going to work out.” You have to work with someone who has a commonsense approach to generating that income check and utilizing your savings, and who is also willing to take time to explain it to you so you understand.

Helping people who are responsible for designing their own retirement is one of my passions. Just like my parents, my clients want to retire, relax and have a monthly check for the rest of their lives—without having to raid the fridge!

Debbie Craig, CFP, MBA, CRPS, has more than 16 years experience advising clients. She is a branch manager with Craig Wealth Advisors, an independent branch of Raymond James Financial Services, member FINRA/SIPC, with offices in Traverse City and Alden. She is the developer of the “Piece by Piece Retirement Income Model.” All opinions belong to Craig and are not those of Raymond James. She can be reached at Debbie.craig@raymondjames.com or visit her website www.craigwealthadvisors.com.

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If you want a career in health care, now you have even more degree options available from Grand Valley in Traverse City. New programs offered this fall include a master’s degree in public health (M.P.H.) and a bachelor’s degree in allied health sciences. Find out more at our health program open house on Saturday, April 16!

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NAME: Liz Bahl, 43, Traverse City

JOB: Owner of Nectarine, a premium waxing studio. ("Nectarine, Because It's Fuzz Free.") I am a professional face- and body-waxer. What it really means is that I do a lot of Brazilian and bikini waxes. I've been an esthetician for nine years, and I've been operating Nectarine for almost three years. Nectarine is different because waxing is all I do.

THE BACKGROUND: I was an attorney for eight years and hated it. I switched to esthetics because I thought I wanted to be a makeup artist. Turns out, there is not a huge call for makeup artistry in Cincinnati, where I attended beauty school. My best friend from high school, Susan Ruoff (owner of Venus in downtown Traverse City) told me repeatedly there was a need in town for someone with my skill set. I'm so glad I listened to her and moved here.

THE PASSION: Waxing is the best part of esthetics because you can talk with your clients and give them immediate results. I love waxing because it totally satisfies my need for instant gratification. Also, I'm a little OCD about hair removal, which, I believe, makes for a great waxer, whether you're having eyebrows, underarms or your bikini done.

THE DETAILS: There is no average day in my business, but Brazilians are by far my most popular service. A Brazilian at Nectarine means all the hair off in the front and the back. I do not judge my clients tall, short, fat, thin, all body types are welcome. As a self-proclaimed “big girl,” I understand people’s reticence in taking off their clothes in front of strangers. I wax women and men. But I have to tell customers: “Sorry, guys, bikini and Brazilian services are for women only.”

THE ASSURANCE: I promise to make your visit as pleasant and comfortable as I can. Plus, waxing is not as painful as you think! The benefits to waxing far outweigh any temporary discomfort. I usually talk to my first-timers before they undress and explain exactly what will be happening. Then, I keep up a stream of amusing chatter until they're as relaxed as they are going to be. Bottom line is that waxing is an uncomfortable experience, but it doesn't have to be miserable.

THE INSIDER SCOOP: There are some things you can do to prepare for a pleasant experience. First and foremost, make sure the hair is long enough—usually one-quarter to one-half inch, or about two weeks of growth. Try not to set up an appointment the week before your period begins (the body is more sensitive, which leads to more pain), and a couple Motrin/Ibuprofen about a half hour before the appointment helps. Though tempting, drinking alcohol before a service is not recommended as it can increase the pain level. I also advise: Please don't book a Brazilian appointment the day of a big event. I've said it before: That area will be “looky, no touchy” for 24 to 48 hours. I've thrown out my back before, but I'm working on stretches and other things to keep my body in tip-top form.

THE HOME FRONT: I am a single chick with a 14-and-a-half-year-old dachshund named Zoe who keeps me company. When I'm not working, you can find me walking her, or grabbing a beer or coffee downtown with friends. Otherwise, I may be out exploring the many activities this part of Michigan has to offer.

To learn more or to connect with Liz Bahl and Nectarine waxing studio, call or text 231.649.8080 or visit www.nectarineTC.com. The waxing studio is located in downtown Traverse City at 104 S. Union St., Suite 201.
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A FIRST-BORN child, I arrived in 1971 to 20-year-old parents determined to raise their daughter in the most loving environment possible. I knew my parents were hard workers who always did the best they could. When two more children arrived within three and a half years, it was baby overload and my caregiving career began.

Since then, I have gone on to become a professional caregiver. This work has allowed me to discover my empathy and compassion for others on a new level.

At the same time, this spiritual journey has taught me the value of each and every person. You matter. Regardless of background, religion, beliefs—you matter. When people hold different truths or beliefs than mine, I lean in. I want to know what drives their passion for their “thing.” As I listen, I am deeply moved by the stories of others. My friends tease me about my trademark phrase: “I love all of the people.”

As much as I love to invest in caring for others, however, it has always been a challenge for me to be on the receiving end of such compassion. But that all had to change.

Enter cancer.

As a caregiver, it was almost incomprehensible to think that I might not have what I needed to take care of myself in any situation. Then when I got sick and became a colon cancer patient at the age of 39, it was my reality. And it came with an epiphany.

On the morning of surgery, my husband, Jay, and I sat together, drained and exhausted shells of who we had been just months earlier. Yet, somehow, I felt an inexplicable fullness. I tried to share with Jay: “Do you feel that? It feels like a huge portal of love just opened up. I feel flooded.”

Jay responded, “Do you have any idea how many people are thinking about and praying for you? We need it, Kim, because our well is dry. We have nothing left. We are going to have to accept what everyone is giving us.”

In the months and years since that moment, I have come to understand how profoundly we need one another.

Thankfully, surgery was a success; I felt immediate relief. And Jay and I did indeed learn to accept help from others. During my treatment, my mom returned to her initial mothering role and I transformed temporarily back into a 5-year-old child. Help, prayers, and love came from all directions.

NEW NON-PROFIT POOLS RESOURCES TO OFFER END-OF-LIFE SUPPORT

BY KIMBERLY MORSE

It is clear to me now that the love available in this world is so much bigger than battling illness and facing death. Today I am cancer-free, and still grateful for the experience.

My journey added an important piece to my life as a caregiver. I became passionate about end-of-life issues.

Cancer created in me a dark space and time of painful introspection, something that my doctors termed “situational depression.” I realized that society holds onto an unattended-to grief that fuels the fire of death-phobia. This death-phobia is a disenfranchised grief—grief that is traditionally “socially unacceptable”—not unlike grief from divorce, infertility, addiction, job loss, and, as in my case, an illness such as cancer.

The social stigma of this grief has huge negative implications that can result in years of depression, the breakdown of families and relationships, and feelings of hopelessness. Acknowledging this feeling and moving through it with intention led me to awareness and acceptance that the circle of life includes death.

In my experience, time doesn’t heal all things. Awareness, acceptance and action are what create healing.
Throughout my diagnosis, treatment and recovery, my friend, Danielle Gray, an ER nurse and fellow volunteer EMT, became my patient advocate and was involved in all areas of my care. This bonded us for life. Our conversations about high expectations for our own work as advocates and educators brought to light the initial concept for our new non-profit organization, Golden Intentions.

Golden Intentions embodies an innovative, yet remarkably simple, concept: give our community a safe, compassionate resource where they can get guidance and support about end-of-life issues. We do not do estate planning, accounting, hospice care or counseling. We are not a funeral home, retirement community or a home-care agency. (However, we know of plenty around town.) Instead, Golden Intentions provides our community with a bridge to those services that enables people to approach such entities comfortably and confidently when they are needed.

Generally speaking, most of us don’t give ourselves permission even to think about the end of life, let alone plan for it. I didn’t until I faced the very real possibility of death. My experience left me filling out an Advance Directive alone, in secret. In hindsight, I can imagine how devastating this could have been for my loved ones if my surgery had a different outcome.

Planning for the end of life is often thought of as a daunting task. Many of us are unsure about what to do, where to go and whom to trust. There is power in knowing that it’s appropriate to ask: “Is this the end, doctor? Because if it is, there are a few things I would like to, and not like to, experience—I’d like to discuss those now.”

Each of our lives is a story. Whether we acknowledge it or not, most of us want to have a good final chapter. That will look different for everyone.

For many, end of life decision making is a private process, yet what brings many individuals peace and joy at the end is knowing that their loved one was given the opportunity to think and plan with a supportive circle of people. Golden Intentions exists to bring people together in loving conversations around end-of-life planning.

The truth is: we need one another.

Kimberly Morse is the president and CEO of Golden Intentions, Inc., a new community non-profit organization encouraging end-of-life conversation, preparation and celebration. She is a life-long caregiver. She has managed specialized adult foster care (AFC) homes and served as the health and safety director at the American Red Cross. Please visit goldenintentions.org or call 231.714.4475 for more details.
Warriors and seekers and dragons, oh my!

BY ANNE STANTON

IF YOUR KIDS LOVE TO READ, they won’t want to miss an upcoming book battle and one of the country’s most popular fantasy authors, an event hosted by the National Writers Series.

New York Times bestselling author Tui Sutherland will take the stage on March 20 to talk about her life as one of the country’s most popular children’s fantasy authors and the 40 books she’s written. They include the Wings of Fire, Spirit Animals, Seekers, Avatar and Menagerie series. But you may not recognize her name—Sutherland goes by several pseudonyms, including Erin Hunter.

Her exciting newest book, Escaping Peril, just took the Wings of Fire series to #2 on the New York Times bestseller list and also appeared #5 on the Wall Street Journal bestseller list, and #4 on the Publishers Weekly bestseller list.

“It was wildly fun to write,” Sutherland said.

Some might consider Sutherland destined to write children’s and young adult books. She was born in Venezuela on July 31 (the same birthday as Harry Potter) and named after a noisy New Zealand bird. Her family eventually settled in New Jersey where she fell in love with theatre.

“Much to my parents’ relief, I abandoned my theatrical aspirations after college for the far more stable and lucrative career of fiction writing (<—ha ha! hilarious joke!),” Sutherland wrote on her blog.

At the end of the talk, kids can meet Sutherland in person and get their favorite book signed.

Guest host for the event is Brianne Farley, a beloved children’s illustrator and author.

Before taking the stage to talk, Sutherland will award a trophy to the champion Battle of the Books team. More than 130 fourth and fifth graders are engaging in the battle, a book-based quiz competition organized by the National Writers Series.

The semifinals are on March 12 at West Middle School (the public is welcome to attend) with 24 teams competing. The two top teams will compete on March 20.

The response to engage in battle was overwhelming from the first day it was announced. Organizers originally hoped to get 16 teams, but had to call an emergency meeting when nearly twice as many teams wanted to sign up. The first-place team will win a Grand Traverse Day Experience unlike any other. Think limo ride, chocolate chip pancakes and a book shopping spree at Horizon Books.

“Such a win for literacy,” said Angie Morgan, who is leading the volunteer team with Marcy Lindberg. “Young kids get to read together and dream together.”

The Battle of the Books begins at 2:30 pm at Lars Hockstad Auditorium, Central Grade School, 301 Seventh St., Traverse City. Tui Sutherland takes the stage at 4 p.m.

Tickets cost $5 for students 18 and under, $10 for educators, and $15 for adults. Please go to mynorthtickets.com to order or call 800-836-0717.

NWS thanks its major sponsors: LeadStar, eFulfillment, Hagerty and OneUpWeb. Additional sponsors include Huntington Bank, Traverse City State Bank and Alfie Logo Gear.

For more information, please visit www.nationalwritersseries.com.
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Rachel Linsmeier has her students hitting all the right notes  
BY KRISTEN LOWE

WHETHER IT’S A SONG from your wedding or the pop anthem you played all summer when you were 17, music has the unmatched ability to make people feel things.

Rachel Linsmeier feels it. Music has shaped her whole life. Now she’s using it to inspire local students as the band director at Traverse City West High School.

“I signed up to be a band teacher because I know what band did for me,” Rachel said. “It made me grow into the person I wanted to be.”

Being a band student helped Rachel learn how to think of others, take pride in her work and be a team player. But she didn’t get to where she is today without a lot of hard work.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

In fifth grade, Rachel started playing the trumpet, which continues to be her favorite and main instrument. She played in jazz bands and marching bands throughout her time at Okemos High School, outside of East Lansing. Then at Michigan State University, Rachel performed in the wind symphony, the university’s top performance group. She was also drum major of the Spartan Marching Band. (Yes, the one that does the crazy backbend on the football field!)

“It was impossible not to be swept up in just how great that all was,” Rachel said. “The thrill of performing in front of 80,000 people was a riot.”

Rachel went on to do her student teaching at Traverse City West High School. There, she learned under the school’s well-storied band director, Pat Brumbaugh. When Pat retired in 2013, Rachel was tapped to take over.

Suddenly, Rachel had the top job, responsible for 140 kids in the high-school band program, including West’s three concert bands, two jazz bands and one marching band.

Advanced students go through a rigorous audition process to become section leaders. They’re the ones in charge of teaching other groups of about five to 25 students. Rachel explained, “That’s something I love about marching band because it gets kids to do more than they think they’re capable of.”

Among budgeting, coordinating travel and the music itself, Rachel admitted, it’s a lot. But she wouldn’t have it any other way. “We travel down to Mount Pleasant and down to East Lansing and get to do all sorts of gigs around town,” she said. “It’s a great experience for the kids.”
MORE THAN MUSIC

Rachel knows first-hand that music is a vehicle for beautiful things to happen with high school kids, the first being teamwork.

“It’s one of the few classrooms where you’re relying on the person next to you to do their part, and they’re relying on you to do your part,” she said. “If we’re all going to perform well, then we have to do it together.”

Another reason Rachel hopes her students become lifelong musicians is so they can be changed for the better. That inspiration can come in different ways, whether through actively continuing to play music or simply appreciating and understanding the hard work that goes into a favorite song on the radio.

“A lot of times we can’t quite know what effect music has on us until we really experience it ourselves,” she said. “They can go to a concert and appreciate that and know the effect music can have for everybody, it makes our society better.”

Most of all, Rachel wants to give her students confidence: “My hope is that they become somebody who feels they can take on big challenges. Because they have taken on big challenges here in this classroom and performing.”

For Rachel, it’s about giving her students a chance to appreciate something beyond everything else: “When we make music together, just to be able to see the pride in their eyes at the end of a performance… there’s nothing like that.”

INSPIRING WOMEN

Rachel has gotten to where she is today because of her talent and hard work. However, it’s not lost on her that she’s in the minority in her career field. In her many years playing music, she’s never played under a female band director or been in a band led by a woman.

“There is an extremely low number of women in this field in general,” she noted. “Especially when you start to advance to the high levels. I can count the number of professional female conductors I know on one hand.”

Being in the minority, Rachel is well aware of her position as a female role model. Her career advice to women: “It’s very important to do what makes you happy, it doesn’t matter who you are or what gender you are,” she said. “Do your job well, they can’t argue with that.”

As for her students in general, Rachel couldn’t be happier. “I’m honored to be in that role, to be able to carry the torch for such an awesome group of kids,” she said. “They work so hard and it’s very satisfying to be able to say, ‘That’s my band!’”

Rachel Linsmeier is the band director at Traverse City West High School. She can be reached at LinsmeieRa@tcaps.net.

TUNE IN!

All this year, Grand Traverse Woman and 7&4 News will be profiling some of the most powerful women in northern Michigan. Look for Kristen Lowe’s reports on 7&4 News and her articles in every issue of Grand Traverse Woman.
GTWOMAN ANNUAL

Spring WINE TOUR

Friday, April 22nd 5-9pm

5:30 Depart from Traverse City Civic Center on Celtic Party Bus

5:45 BOWERS HARBOR VINEYARDS:
Sample Michigan’s Number One Selling Pinot Grigio! Next, enjoy samples of their Riesling Medium Sweet, and Bowers Harbor Red. Nibble on gourmet cheese boards and flatbreads provided by Boathouse Restaurant. Don’t forget to have a splash of their Peach Apple Hard Cider to tantalize your palate while you shop. Take advantage of AMAZING wine and cider discounts on bottles to bring home.

6:45 BRY'S ESTATE VINEYARD & WINERY:
Enjoy 5 wine tastings and their wonderful cheese and charcuterie boards! Preview and purchase lavender products from the all new Secret Garden at Brys Estate - opening June 2016.

7:45 BONOBO WINERY:
Enjoy the delights of their delicious quality wine paired with their fantastic small plate options. (We can’t promise a glimpse of Mr. Oosterhouse... but we can promise wine!) Things get really good at this stop...we’ve added in the game changers: Aunt B’s Cake and DJ Aaron with Avatar!

Then we will head back to the Civic Center by 9:00pm with memories of a girls night out well deserved!

OH WAIT: One tiny, teeny awesome detail: At each stop, Grand Traverse Resort & Spa will treat us to mini-spa treatments. Come prepared to be pampered and to swoon a little at your pretty nails. There will be 2 Grand Prizes given away on tour by GTResort & Spa: Pure Serenity Packages (4 hour spa package that includes a massage, facial, manicure and pedicure) - valued at $250! Also fun swag bags for each lady which will include spa goodies and special offers for attendees only.

Theme: We wear our sunglasses at night!
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A MID-LIFE CAREER AWAKENING

BY RAMONA PLEVA, DC

FIVE YEARS AGO I took an inventory of my life. I was living in Cedar, had great friends, a good career, been active in the community and been able to travel. For the most part I had nothing to complain about: life was good. But it had become stagnant. I hate stagnant!

Deep down I knew that a new hairstyle or a great pair of shoes wasn’t going to fix this. (Just to be sure though, I did buy the shoes!) I was at a crossroads of “Go Big or Go Home.” I decided to “Go Big,” which is code for “turn your life upside down because you can!”

I had always been a proponent of chiropractic care and, as a massage therapist, I had often referred my clients to chiropractors. I loved the fact that chiropractic allows the body’s innate ability to heal without drugs and surgery. So I thought: “I wonder if I could do that?”

On a whim, I applied to Life University College of Chiropractic in Marietta, Ga. My chiropractors in Traverse City were both alumni of the school, highly recommended Life and I loved their approach to chiropractic and healing. I figured if I didn’t get accepted, then I could at least say I tried! I had little attachment to the outcome.

A few weeks later I spun off a slippery road and totaled my vehicle. As I was spinning out of control, I remember knowing that I wasn’t going to be hurt. There had to be a reason I walked away from my shattered vehicle.

My chiropractor told me, “There are no such things as accidents.” I knew he was right and I was being nudged toward change.

I visited Life University for a prospective student weekend. Our group was told, “You don’t choose chiropractic, chiropractic chooses you.”

Was I “chosen”? My head was elated at the thought of “the chiropractic calling.” Then I learned what the rigors of chiropractic school would entail. My jaw hit the ground when told chiropractic students, on average, take 25 credits per 10-week quarter! The curriculum was a four-and-a-half-year program crammed into three-and-a-half years. I wondered, “Can I really go three-and-a-half years without sleep?”

I was accepted into the program.

I answered “the call,” applied for financial aid, packed up my life and headed to Georgia. I began chiropractic school in January 2012 at the age of 41. I had been away from academia for 19 years and my study skills had definitely dissipated along with the ozone layer.

I looked around the lecture hall and was surrounded mostly by 20-somethings, some of whom had never even had a job before! I felt more than a little out of place. My first class was biochemistry and it became very clear that I was going to need a tutor (a 20-something no less!)

The next three-and-a-half years were the most challenging and rewarding (thus far) of my life. With the heavy class schedule I wasn’t able to work. Grad Plus loans became my friend! I sat through endless lectures, took countless exams, passed all my National Board exams, stress ate, gained weight, lost weight and lost sleep. I even did homework in my sleep for classes that didn’t exist (literally?)

My weekends were filled with studying for exams, going to chiropractic seminars and running to Starbucks. I made great friends and we became each other’s family and support system.

Never once during the chaos of school did I think of quitting. I would be a chiropractor! My future patients were depending on me to provide them with chiropractic care that would allow their bodies to heal. I needed to make sure I was ready to serve.

A year ago I took a chiropractic seminar with Dr. Louis Corleto. He authored the book, “Healing vs. Curing,” and signed the book to me saying, “Congrats on saying yes to the call of your soul. Keep setting them free.” It summed up perfectly what I felt called to do.

My life during school had been well planned out for three years. I was coming closer to graduation and the “now what?” was fast approaching.

I realized that working with children is fun and rewarding. Kids are very organic with how they respond to chiropractic care. They hop up on the table, get adjusted and then go about their lives. I love how resolving simple health issues in children allows them to grow into healthier adults.

I also found that an underserved chiropractic population is children with Attention Deficient Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder. Their brain can be “stuck” in a pattern that doesn’t allow them to develop appropriately. Research has shown chiropractic care can stimulate their neurology and improve their overall health and wellbeing.

My hope is to bring vitality to these amazing children and “set them free” as I begin my new career.

My “Go Big or Go Home” moment has evolved into “Go Big and then Go Home.” I’m elated to be back home and serving my community. I’m so glad I had the courage to answer this career call!

“I had been away from academia for 19 years and my study skills had definitely dissipated with the ozone layer.”

Ramona Pleva, D.C., is the owner of Northern Lights Chiropractic, PLLC. Her office is located at 2506 Crossing Circle in Traverse City. She can be reached at 231.421.3333 or at drpleva@northernlightschiropractic.com.
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IN A LIFE full of questionable choices, 11 years ago I made a really good one. I decided to start “job sharing” with my wife, Johanna. We were both physical therapists at a rehab clinic in Tucson, Ariz., and our first son, Carter, was just born. I wanted to be there to help raise him, so Johanna began working the mornings and I worked the afternoons. In between, we chased Carter around.

Going part-time and earning part-time pay as well as part-time benefits wasn’t an easy decision. We were living a comfortable life as a two-paycheck family. Eating out. Driving two cars. Taking trips. Owning fancy electronic gizmos. We wondered, by working just 20 hours a week apiece, would we run out of money? Would we be eating beans and crackers every night? Would it affect our careers? Would we be happy?

Little did I know all the positive changes that choice would trigger. Today, living in Traverse City, we continue to job share, now chasing two boys (Jameson arrived in 2006) and we are indeed happy. By choosing to live more simply—no TV, no shiny gadgets—and buying less stuff, we haven’t run out of money. No beans and crackers every night, either.

I even gave up my driver’s license to ensure I would ride my bike more. I love riding. It calms me and allows me to think. It’s my Prozac, my church, my happy place.

How do we make this lifestyle work? For starters, I get up embarrassingly early to get everyone out the door on time. We have a fleet of bike trailers of different sizes that I use for groceries, hauling and errands. Thank goodness Traverse City is flat! (Full disclosure: We do own a vehicle and I occasionally catch rides with Johanna in the minivan.)

Not having a driver’s license in Northern Michigan is odd. Add in the whole vegetarian, environmentalist, liberal, bike-nerd thing and it gets even more odd. But I just do my thing. I don’t miss TV, which is weird as I used to watch a ton as a kid.

We have a VOIP phone at home. I use our laptop and an old iPhone 4 that was given to me, which we use to call/text over Wi-Fi. Thank goodness Wi-Fi is everywhere. And it’s free. Needless to say, my wife is understanding and my friends are patient.

Through all this, I’ve learned that job sharing makes me happier at home and a better physical therapist. I have the time to help out around the house—I’m not the best dishwasher or laundry-folder or gardener, but I try. And I’m productive at work because I’m happy to be there. It’s the perfect balance.

My wife and I just knew we couldn’t have it both ways. It’s either work more to earn more to spend more, or consume less to work less to have more time. We chose the latter.

While job sharing with a spouse doesn’t make you a lot of money, it does give you the gift of time. The luxury of time.

In 2002, I realized just how important time was when I lost my dad to cancer, melanoma. He was only 48. They thought they got it all but it came back a year later and he died six months after that on Christmas Day. It was an agonizingly slow and painful death, hard to watch. I was only 28 at the time. He was an elementary physical education teacher and a phenomenal athlete. I think about him every day. I’m sad he wasn’t able to meet my boys.

My dad’s death was a wake-up call. Life is short. Time is precious. I wanted to make my life matter. I wanted to make my dad proud by making a difference.
Making my time count

I already felt like I was making a difference through my work. As a PT, I helped others hurt less to move more and I have loved doing it. It has been very fulfilling. My “job” rarely felt like “work.” Still, I wondered: Could there be more?

With the breathing room that this flexible lifestyle allowed, I was able to think about what I wanted to do with some of my downtime and how I could make a difference beyond my office. Naturally, I did a lot of thinking on my bike. (In the winter I ride 20–40 miles a week and in the summer it’s more like 200–300 miles.)

One thing I realized while riding was that I wanted to be engaged more in my community, in this amazing town. So I got to know my neighbors. I volunteered with local groups. The boys and I spent our mornings exploring Traverse City’s wonderful places—the library, the children’s museum, the beaches, the parks. I began to make friends with several of Traverse City’s many awesome people.

It was with the support of these awesome people that Johanna and I launched Carter’s Compost, a bike-powered community composting operation. Five years later, Carter, and now Jamo too, along with five other neighborhood kids are still slinging buckets and raising awareness about the awesomeness of small-scale composting.

Empowering my boys and other youth to be confident, active and independent while using their bikes to do good made me feel like I was making a difference in my neighborhood. Still, I wanted to do more.

When both boys started school, I began to notice things: there were fewer bikes and longer car lines; like-minded moms and dads who wanted to bike to school, but simply didn’t have the time; and unsafe riding by kids as they pedaled on sidewalks or didn’t know how to signal or negotiate a 4-way stop.

Because my wife and I had the time, we decided to try to make a difference. We started inviting neighborhood families to drop their kids off at our house so we could bike with them to school. I would lead the “bike train” in the morning and Johanna would pedal home with the group in the afternoon.

And that’s how Norte! a bike-centric, youth-focused advocacy organization was born. Thanks to many wonderful people, Norte! has taken off. I’m now its first executive director. I get paid to ride bikes with kids. How awesome is that?

Even better: Kids in the area are learning the confidence that comes with safe bike riding; the area has a little less traffic and car pollution; and the community has a greater sense of, well, “community.”

Because of that one career decision 11 years ago to prioritize my time, I’m now happy at home, fulfilled at work and engaged in my community. I feel like I’m making a difference. I think my dad would be proud.
The Story of a Librarian

‘At the age of 50, I graduated with a Bachelor’s Degree. But I wasn’t finished.’

BY GAIL PARSONS

LIBRARIES have always been part of my life, through the good times and the rough patches. For most of us, life isn’t a fairytale story ending in “happily ever after.” Instead, life’s story is filled with ordinary women (and men) overcoming adversity time and again, persevering despite the odds and choosing our own adventure. Perhaps my story can serve as an inspiration to others who have not been blessed with smooth beginnings.

Most of my childhood was spent in a two-bedroom, second-floor apartment in Saginaw, filled to the brim with five children and my parents. My parents struggled with alcoholism and depression their entire lives, and it obviously had an effect on my siblings and me.

One bright spot was the weekly bookmobile visit to the housing project where we lived. An even better treat was the monthly trip to the historic Hoyt Library in downtown Saginaw.

Despite the turmoil at home, my siblings and I did well in school and envisioned better futures for ourselves. I dreamed of becoming an archaeologist, nurse or maybe a librarian. Due to the many hours I spent at the library with my nose in a book, my sisters proclaimed that I SHOULD be a librarian.

As a teenager, I did apply for a job at our library, but my choices instead resulted in pregnancy, my dropping out of high school and marriage. I was devastated. Despite my situation, my love of learning drove me to earn my diploma. By age 29, I had three beautiful children and was divorced.

As a single parent, I enrolled in a few classes at our local community college. It felt good to learn again and allow myself to enjoy the small successes. During that time, I worked to instill in my children the same love of learning by reading together each night at bedtime. It was our favorite part of the day.

Eventually, I got a job at a branch library in Saginaw as a front desk clerk. I loved it! It was exciting to see all of the library materials come and go every day.

I wanted to be more involved in library service but didn’t know where to start. I also met someone. We married and blended our two families together with a total of five children. Life was busy but satisfying and happy. And yet some inner voice pushed me to do more.

Still plugging away one or two college classes at a time, I progressed up the ladder at the library, first as the library director’s secretary and later as Human Resources and Finance Assistant. I was like a freight train on a roll until my parents both began suffering from illnesses related to their lifestyle, resulting in the interruption of my coursework.

My parents died within five months of each other. As the eldest child, I was left to deal with settling their estate. I subsequently dove back into completing my college education.

In 2004, at the age of 50, I graduated from Central Michigan University with a Bachelor of Community Development degree with an emphasis on Public Administration. But I wasn’t finished. A dear friend and mentor encouraged me to take the plunge and get my Master of Library and Information Science degree from Wayne State University.

By 2008 I had finally reached my goal. I was a librarian! The elation was short-lived. Before graduation, my husband was stricken with lung cancer and passed away nine months later without the chance to celebrate with me after all the hours of studying and patience on his part.

I forged ahead and became the head of Hoyt Library, the same fairy castle from my childhood. While serving on the Michigan Library Association Board and the Library of Michigan Board of Trustees, more opportunities revealed themselves.

I learned that the Traverse Area District Library was seeking a business manager, quite similar to my previous role in Saginaw. Like many others before me, I had vacations in Traverse City and loved the place and people, so I jumped at the challenge. Another dream came true when I got the job!

So here I am now, director of Traverse Area District Library, at long last where I wanted to be all those years ago—promoting the importance of learning and libraries for everyone. It’s been a long and challenging road for me, through the many cycles of personal setbacks and career successes, and I’m glad that a library was always there when I needed it most.

When I walk through our newly transformed Youth Services Department in the Woodmore building, the satisfaction I get from seeing a new generation of children enjoying the library is overwhelming. I know that some of these young people will see the library as I did—a place to experience worlds of information—and, I hope, an integral part of their journey.

Gail Parsons is the director of the Traverse Area District Library (TADL) system. She oversees district library operations, works with library trustees to manage the budget, and identifies areas for improvement while guiding the future of the library. She brings 34 years of progressive library and civic leadership experience to her role. Gail currently serves as president of the Kiwanis Club of Traverse City. In addition, she is the proud parent of two daughters and one son, whose own successes include overseas military service and teaching at a community college. She can be reached at gparsons@tadl.org.
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Is your life crazy? Are you never home? Do you miss your kids, your husband, your friends? Maybe it’s time to step back and reassess what you want, really want, in life.

Meet Ty Schmidt, the founder of the bike group, Norte! Everyone in TC has seen Ty wheeling around: He’s the guy on his bike in all types of weather. And he’s usually got a bunch of kids trailing along behind him too. Ty doesn’t have a TV or an iPad. He chooses to live without a driver’s license and he runs his iPhone 4 on wi-fi only. He lives on a part-time paycheck – he job shares as a physical therapist at Munson with his wife – so that they can both be home raising their two young boys.

In a nutshell, Ty’s motto is less stuff, more time. We like his motto.

Come to our April 13th luncheon to hear how Ty has built a life around the things that matter and how you can too. Stop being consumed by work and gadgets, and ditch that nagging feeling that you “should” be doing something else. This luncheon is about finding your happy place and finding a new path! Join us and hear Ty’s story. You’ll be inspired!

Ty founded Norte! with his wife Johanna in the fall of 2013 to advocate for more active, engaged, and bike-for-life young people in Traverse City. They helped organize the inaugural Traverse City Bike To School Day in the spring of 2015 which boasted 635 bikes at 19 different area schools. They have also helped start up many bike-tastic programs in Traverse City: The Commuting Library a books-by-bike project in partnership with TADL, TC Rides, a summertime slow roll in town, a network of 15 bike trains to 6 different schools, and the TC Bike Library which allows students to check out a bicycle to ride to school. Find Norte! at http://elgruponorte.org. Buy tickets to hear Ty speak at www.grandtraversewoman.com today!
I was raised in a family where there was always room and always enough food for unexpected visitors. As a family of six, it was a very common occurrence. Instead of sitting at the large dining room table, we would sit around a tiny round table using whatever could fill in as a chair. I can’t even recall how many people we could fit around that thing. We were a foodie family before foodie was a thing. When I was 15, I was fired from my first job in retail. Thank goodness! I applied on a whim at Chili’s to be a host. That was the start of a long career in hospitality.

My career began in earnest when I started working at Morton’s Steak House, a high-end corporate steak house. From there I went to Rioja in Denver where I had the privilege of working under Beth Gruitch and James Beard Award-winning chef, Jennifer Jasinski. Through this environment I was able to develop the skills necessary to be an effective manager. The leadership of Beth was inspirational. Her goal was to create an environment that was warm and welcoming while executing extremely high standards of service. From there I moved my family to Traverse City where I joined Bistro Foufou and continue to embody these ideals.”

Katie Anderson

118 Cass Street, Traverse City  231-421-6583  Bistrofoufou.com
OUR ANNUAL SEE JANE LOSE PROGRAM BEGINS!
THANK YOU TO ALL WHO APPLIED. IT WASN’T AN EASY TASK NARROWING THE FIELD, BUT AFTER A LOT OF INTERVIEWS AND DISCUSSION (ARM-WRESTLING), WE’D LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO THE 2016 JANES. LET THE CHANGES BEGIN!

**Courtney Rehmer, 33**

- Wife, mom to son Mason (3½) and daughter Emily (4 mos.)
- Co-host of the morning radio show on Z93
- Involved in a number of fundraising projects throughout Northern Michigan
- Volunteers for Father Fred Frostbite Food Drive, Bras for a Cause and Salvation Army (as a bell-ringer)

**WHEN YOU FOUND OUT:** I was on the other line with my dad when Michelle from Fit For You buzzed in and left a voicemail. I was nervous. I tried to gauge from her voice in the message if I was picked. She did not give anything away. So I got up the nerve and called back. As soon as I told her who I was, she asked if I was ready to change my name to “Jane” and I screamed!

**THE MOTIVATION:** My children and husband… and every time I look in the mirror.

**THE “AHA” MOMENT:** When I noticed there was a rip in my Spanx. I knew that couldn’t be good. LOL! I really did not know how much weight I’d gained until they got me on the scale. Horrid!

**THE MINDSET:** Things will have to change. In the past I’ve joked that I don’t run unless I’m being chased and even then, it’s 50/50.

**THE BALANCING ACT:** I have an amazing husband who, I know, will lend the extra support I will need to manage work, kids, our home and this challenge. My co-workers and boss are also very supportive.

**THE HURDLE:** Food. Too much food. I need to seriously re-learn how to eat healthy and make good food choices. I have a serious issue with self-control when it comes to food. I know my portion sizes are way too big and it’s finally caught up with me. It’s even worse now that I’m breastfeeding. I am hungry all the time and I need to educate myself on what a healthy snack is. Just the other day, I spent 10 minutes at Speedway trying to figure out the best snack to grab and head back to work. Is it peanuts or a protein bar?

**THE ANSWER THAT STOOD OUT IN HER APPLICATION:** “I want to be a healthy role model for my daughter. My mom struggled with her weight my entire life. It wasn’t until last spring when she had to undergo a traumatic gastric bypass (due to health problems) that she’s finally at a healthy weight. I don’t want history to repeat itself.”

**Meat the Janes**

**HEIGHT:** 5’7”
**WEIGHT:** 210 LBS.
**WEIGHT LOSS GOAL:** 35 LBS.
Erin Johnson, 40

- Wife, mom to daughters Sloane (6) and Delaney (4)
- Public health nurse at the Grand Traverse County Health Department and maternity nurse at Munson Medical Center
- Volunteer for Dance Battle for the Cure and the March of Dimes March for Babies
- Master Gardener - volunteer

WHEN YOU FOUND OUT: I had almost convinced myself that it was no big deal if I didn’t get chosen...because really, eight weeks without chocolate is an extremely long time! I tried to reason with myself that even applying for the program was a step in the right direction. But in truth I had placed a Post-It with a reminder to myself to “apply to See Jane Lose—January” way back in the summer. I realized as I got off the phone with the big news that I need this kick in the booty to push me down the path I need to maintain in the long run. What’s that? I need this program to kick my butt into gear and get me going. So I am not going to return to square one after my five-week health regimen. Honestly, I figure if I am going to put in all of this effort then I deserve the best me that I can give to me.

THE MOTIVATION: The number on the scale doesn’t matter to me as much as how I feel. And for the last two years, I have felt tired, irritable, unmotivated and frustrated! I have used fatigue as my excuse too many times. Turning 40 definitely made me realize that there is no time like the present.

THE “AHA” MOMENT: Agh, yes, that moment when you realize you weigh more than you did when you were full-term with your second child. When your daughter asks you if that is a baby in your belly (uhhh, no, more like a bagel or two...) And the showstopper: when a friend posts a picture to Facebook of you at a baby shower, sitting next to the mother-to-be, and you look decidedly more pregnant than she does!

THE MINDSET: I want to drive past McDonald’s and not give it a second thought, even on those nights when I am tired, hungry and have 50 things to do before bed. I know that the benefits—increased energy, weight loss, better sleep, new confidence—will be the incentive I need to get up at 4:30 in the morning and push me through intense workouts.

THE BALANCING ACT: A strong fear of failure combined with a competitive edge will hold me accountable to the other Janes and the GTWoman readers through this competition. Truthfully, I worry, what if I am the only Jane in the history of Janes who doesn’t lose any weight?

THE HURDLE: Time management. There always seems to be something more important, more pressing than learning to have a healthy relationship with food. A weekend shift to pick up at the hospital. A project deadline at work. Lunches to pack. Children to shuttle. Dog hair to vacuum. The list is never ending. It is a vicious cycle of being “too tired” to work out and then having that fatigue spill over into other aspects of life.

THE ANSWER THAT STOOD OUT IN HER APPLICATION: “I have used the excuse that I will go on a diet when I no longer fit into what is in my closet. But mysteriously, my shirts seem to keep getting smaller. I gave myself a little latitude after having kids but I never thought I would literally be squeezing myself into a size 14. I have vowed not to buy any more pants unless they are a smaller size. I think my co-workers would appreciate some new additions to the four pant rotation I’m on!”

Heather Bartelmay, 45

- Wife, mom to two kids and one dog
- Media sales for Midwestern Broadcasting (Z93, WCCW, WTCM)
- Volunteer for Kingsley Heritage Days, PTO and The Rock of Kingsley

WHEN YOU FOUND OUT: I was in the car when the call came in, my mind on other things, so it took a moment for the news to sink in. Then, of course, I whooped with glee over the news. I am excited to have been chosen. It will be challenging, but I know that I can succeed!

THE MOTIVATION: I have two very active young boys whose activities need a mom who is fit and able not only to keep up with them but also challenge them to greater success. A healthier me equals a healthier family.

THE “AHA” MOMENT: There really isn’t any one moment. I have been “meaning” to get back on track to fitness for some time. I will say it was a reality check when a friend who is in her late 60’s effortlessly walked up the four flights of stairs at my office while I gasped for breath at the end!

THE MINDSET: I have so many convenient excuses (don’t we all) and have put them ahead of my own health regimen. Honestly, I figure if I am going to put myself through the pain and effort that this challenge will bring I am not going to return to square one after that. I need this kick in the boozy to push me down the path I need to maintain in the long run. What’s the old adage? “A body in motion stays in motion.” The same is true for one who doesn’t get in motion in the first place.

THE BALANCING ACT: I hope to balance this carefully, with the help of friends and family. I would very much like to “learn how” to be a “runner” so that no matter where I am I have no excuse for not getting out and getting the job done.

THE HURDLE: There are so many interruptions. Should I get to the grocery store today or stop at the gym? I’m busy with work, kids, house and all the other things that pull at a mother’s attention.

THE ANSWER THAT STOOD OUT IN HER APPLICATION: “I need my healthy body back because I have an awesome husband whose own fitness level has been regained through focus and effort on his part. He lost nearly 50 pounds and I watched his weight loss last year and I’d like to step up to the plate and join him in a healthy makeover. My family deserves the best me that I can give to them. I deserve the best me that I can give to me.”

Sass

Our 3 Janes are taking part in an 8-week program at our sponsor, Fit For You Health Club in Traverse City. The program includes:

- 16 fat-blasting body transformation coaching sessions with the Jane team
- 8 confidence-building group challenges
- 4 educational seminars
- 8 week Fit For You Membership
- Done-for-you-meal plans
- Ongoing nutritional counseling
- Unlimited email coaching and more!

GTOC: Skin care for the Janes, plus makeup and eyewear

Imprés Salon & Spa: Hair color & cut, manicure, make-up and blow out

Photography by Sarah Brown: Before and after photos

Werthmann Life Coaching: One life-coaching journal/ workbook per Jane and bi-monthly group sessions

At Your Service Cleaning: 1 house cleaning for each Jane

Plus Janes get free tickets to all GTWoman Network Nites during the program!
IN 2008 I was working for a wireless telecommunications company as a paralegal. One day the entire staff came in to work and all but one of us was laid off. In that instant, I was faced with unemployment.

I was worried that I would not recover financially. I couldn’t find a comparable job in Traverse City. Others were also faced with the decline of the economy and could not afford to pay me paralegal wages. And, when I answered newspaper ads for legal secretaries, I was told several times that I was too qualified for the position. I didn’t know what to do.

Prior to working with telecommunications, I worked as a paralegal for local attorneys, as far back as 1996. I attended Northwestern Michigan College and graduated with an Associate in Applied Science degree and Legal Assistant Certificate in 1998. I graduated from Davenport University with a major in paralegal studies in 2000. Frustrated, I feared I’d have to take a different career path, or even go back to college.

After much thought, I decided this was the time for me to own my own business. In the past, I had attempted to start various businesses, including web and graphic design, and running a daycare when my children were young. I had always entertained the idea that someday I would work for myself, but I wasn’t quite sure how to make it happen.

Searching the internet, I found that many individuals were using their office skills by working from home as assistants, providing administrative and secretarial services to businesses. I signed up on various forums, asked others a lot of questions and decided this was the path I wanted to venture down for my next career.

I was drafting my business plan when it struck me that there might be an opportunity to use my paralegal skills to attorneys virtually. I searched online for what is now “virtual paralegals,” but found only a couple of people, one of whom resided in Canada, who were providing legal services as paralegals to attorneys. I thought to myself that this is the “niche” I was looking for!
Utilizing my web and graphic design skills, I designed a site for my new business, called “The Virtual Paralegal,” and waited for the clients to “roll” in. That’s not quite what happened. I quickly found that, at the beginning, I had to seek work instead of work coming to me.

So, I found a couple of companies who were requesting someone with legal experience to whom they could subcontract work. I took the opportunity.

Soon, my web site was being found by both attorneys and paralegals interested in what I had to offer. Requesting legal services virtually was a very new venue for attorneys. They had not yet grasped the concept of using someone who was not working in the office right along with them. It was difficult for them to feel comfortable using a paralegal who resided several states away, or even across the U.S., from where they practiced, and whom they may never meet face-to-face. But I kept working hard and proving myself.

For the first couple of years I slowly gained clients; today I work for over 25 attorneys nationwide, and as far away as Guam.

I love working virtually and owning my own business because I have been able to gain independence in my life and the feeling of success. My typical day includes prioritizing my projects and working with five to eight different attorneys from different jurisdictional locations, which may include anything from downloading documents to file on their “cloud,” to researching and drafting a motion or brief. Every day is different from the other and I never know what to expect.

Since starting my business, I have had many ups and downs, and hurdles to climb over. As any business owner knows, sometimes you lack work, and sometimes you are so overwhelmed you don’t know how you will be able to get it all finished. I am thankful that today I do feel overwhelmed at times, but thankful for the opportunities my clients provide me.

One of the biggest challenges I face with attorneys nationally is the difference in laws, procedures and statutes involved in the legal community. I have had to learn the procedures in every state, county and city.

My efforts have paid off. I now have the ability to charge an hourly wage that I would never in a million years make as a paralegal working for in-house attorneys. This has given my family and me financial advantages. There are some downfalls, however, like paying my own taxes and no vacation pay. But all in all, it’s worth it.

Attorneys today are much more open to the concept of using virtual paralegals. Where I used to have to search for clients, I am now receiving about three inquiries a week from new attorneys asking about my service and how it works. This has opened new doors.

I started receiving so many inquiries about how I started my business that I authored a book about becoming a virtual paralegal, which I sell through my web site and Amazon.com.

The best part of being “virtual” is having the ability to work and be productive from any location. I enjoy working from my boat during the warmer months of the year. It is my floating office.

Who would have thought that losing a job could lead to this new career? In the beginning, I was only expecting to be able to provide administrative or data entry work virtually to businesses, not continue to work in the legal community from my home-based office. I am so happy I found a way to utilize my existing skills and not have to go back to school. I have come a long way in the past eight years.

Dawn M. Draper is “The Virtual Paralegal,” providing alternative, cost-effective office support for law firms and other business entities. She can be reached at thevirtualparalegal@gmail.com and 231.577.6783. Learn more at www.thevirtualparalegal.com.
When I’m asked how I came to be a professional musician, I sometimes feel nonplussed. How could I not?

Music was central to everything in my family of origin. My parents, newly wed in Detroit, purchased a piano two years before their first car. At family gatherings, the piano was the hearth we gathered around, singing songs with gusto. At the nightly dinner table we sang “grace,” often in two- or three-part harmony.

My father taught me to play some of his favorites at the piano long before my feet could reach the pedals. We even had a piano in our little cottage in Northport where I spent childhood summers. It was in that small town that I had my first professional music gig: playing guitar and singing at Timber Shores Resort.

Loving small town life led me to take a year off from college. I lived in a one-room schoolhouse in Lake Leelanau and worked at Sugar Foot Saloon. With no phone or TV (or internet!), I relished the isolation and practiced piano many hours.

When the lease was up, and affordable housing was difficult to find, my roommate and I put up a tipi in Peshawbestown (where the first casino was built a few years later). It was a short bike ride to my village maintenance job in Suttons Bay, where I enjoyed doing things such as painting “The Hose House.” At that time there was still a fire engine on the ground floor and a piano on the second. Most workdays for me ended with a practice session on the keys.

Tipi life is not for everyone, but it was delightful for me that summer. It only remotely resembled tent camping. On cool evenings we had a small fire in the middle, keeping cozy even as we gazed up at the stars through the open smoke flaps. The laundromat next to the church had a bathhouse attached. We took daily showers there and also filled a 55-gallon oil drum with water for our huge garden.

Friends often stopped by and we spent many evenings sitting around a fire outside singing songs and playing guitar. Life was simple. (That whole area is now paved over with parking lots—didn’t Joni Mitchell write a song about that?)

The summer after graduation I lived in a tipi again, played folk guitar at The Keller, and otherwise tried to figure out what to do next. Shockingly, I received a call offering me a job in a Top 40 band in New York City. I left a week later with big dreams and expectations for my career. I stayed for 12 years.

Those years provided memorable experiences not possible elsewhere. There are stories I can tell about entertaining famous folks such as Billy Joel and Elizabeth Taylor at my restaurant gig on 46th Street, meeting musicians such as Mick Jagger and Tony Bennett in studios and at parties, and playing Cole Porter’s piano at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

What kept me in the city, what was most rewarding for me, were the opportunities to learn from, and be mentored by, great jazz musicians. These were people I revered and had listened to on recordings, never dreaming I would get to meet them, let alone study or perform with them, all of which eventually happened! Due to my versatility, I survived by working as a pianist, keyboardist, vocalist, music director, arranger and composer, sometimes all in one day.

However, life was hard in the city for a gal who loved small-town life. The glamour was tempered by the bad: cars stolen and broken into, being stranded on subway trains at 2 a.m., hauling heavy equipment by myself, and receiving frequent unwanted advances from men simply because I worked in nightclubs.

I didn’t make enough money to take vacations to escape the city like others did. So, finally in 1990, I accepted a job at Interlochen Arts Academy in order to visit my family easily in Northport during the summer. Thus began my 20 summers as jazz faculty at the camp.

How could I not devote my life to music? It seemed to be a part of every aspect of my existence. After a bungled first marriage, I remarried—a musician. His son, my stepson, has become a world-renowned jazz bassist and our own teenage son is just as obsessed as the rest of us with daily practicing, listening and studying. Music is the universal language.
Dr. Robin Connell, of Grand Rapids and Northport, teaches music theory and jazz studies at Grand Rapids Community College and Aquinas College. She performs frequently around the state of Michigan, co-produces a jazz piano concert series at Fountain Street Church and co-directs the high school jazz ensemble program at St. Cecilia Music Center in Grand Rapids. She especially enjoys opportunities to perform in the Traverse area, often combining it with visiting her mother in Northport. For more information and to see a schedule, visit www.robinconnell.com.

With my summer job at Interlochen ending in 2009 and my son reaching age 10, I witnessed my music career evolve yet again. After years of part-time teaching and playing behind other musicians, it was time to add “bandleader” to the mix.

My current jazz quartet includes my husband on trombone and vocals and sometimes our son on bass. We perform consistently around the state. Our quintet adds Traverse City’s own jazz saxophonist, Laurie Sears. Recent performances include shows in Baldwin, Beulah, Idlewild Music Festival, Mackinaw, Crystal Mountain, Spring Lake, Grand Rapids, Jackson, Leelanau Uncaged, and the Buttermilk Jamboree Music Festival, even at Cordia in Traverse City.

These day I am beginning to fill the role of elder stateswoman in my world of music. I try to include one “youngster” in the band whenever possible. I recall being taken under the wings of the older musicians when I started performing. Now it’s my turn to pass the baton. Not much brings me more delight than to watch the next generation learning the ropes.

Sometimes I feel I let others, and myself, down by not following through with the high-level, big-city career I had originally envisioned. I can feel a pang of regret when I see an article about a woman friend who is now touring Europe or being commissioned to write for an orchestra. I was one of those women and on that trajectory. But the self-pity fades pretty fast.

I feel incredibly blessed to be able to continue doing the two things I love most: teaching and playing jazz. I also love my husband, son and stepson, and have no regrets over making my choice to raise a family. That may sound chichi, but the jazz women who were my peers, and now tour the world, mostly had to make the opposite choice. It’s not fair, but it is still that way.

I’ve never made much money or received employee benefits, and may never be able to retire but, I ask, retire to what? How can I not be a musician?

This past summer was my third summer performing frequently at Lelu Café in Northport, sometimes as a duo and sometimes with my band. In July, my teenage son began playing upright bass beside me. He has no idea how poignant it was for me to have him play some of his first real gigs with me in Northport this summer, the town where I also played my first gigs. His grandma, my mother, cheered him on just as she did for me all those years ago.

The only life choice I’ve made that wasn’t first and foremost about pursuing a life in music was my decision to become a mother. Then again, as I watch my son perform, perhaps it was.

Dr. Robin Connell, of Grand Rapids and Northport, teaches music theory and jazz studies at Grand Rapids Community College and Aquinas College. She performs frequently around the state of Michigan, co-produces a jazz piano concert series at Fountain Street Church and co-directs the high school jazz ensemble program at St. Cecilia Music Center in Grand Rapids. She especially enjoys opportunities to perform in the Traverse area, often combining it with visiting her mother in Northport. For more information and to see a schedule, visit www.robinconnell.com.
Compassionate Care

‘EVERY ANIMAL I WORK WITH BECOMES A PIECE OF MY HEART’

BY JANELLE JEWELL

AS OWNER of Animal Hospice Services of Northern Michigan, I’m often asked: What is animal hospice? First, let me say, it is not all sadness. Sure, there are times when it is difficult, but overall, it is a service that brings great joy!

That joy is found in the daily interactions with clients and their beloved pets. It’s found in small victories such as improved mobility, appetite, blood work or pain management.

Animal hospice fills the gap between no more treatment options and euthanasia. It offers families an alternative way to care for their pet at the end of its life, one they otherwise wouldn’t have. And it fills that time with more comfort, ease and peace.

Animals are my passion. There is no complicated story or series of events that occurred which can explain my vision for animal hospice. Simply put, it came to me one night in a dream!

Call it divine intervention or a deep-rooted love that couldn’t be realized in a conscious state, but after thinking it over carefully, I felt very strongly I was being called to do this work for animals.

I explored the possibility of starting a business. I knew there was no other service like it in the area, but I just wasn’t sure if it would catch on. As I researched online, it quickly became clear that animal hospice had become a thriving business and was a growing trend worldwide!

After discussing the idea with my husband and a few close friends, I realized that not only did I want to pursue an animal hospice business but our community needed it.

So I went for it and started my business! It has been better than I expected.

There is no such a thing as a typical day when it comes to animal hospice. Each case is so different that every day is an adventure. While caring for dogs who are staying with me for respite care, for example, I might do everything from basic pet needs such as feeding and bedding, to more specialized tasks such as post-surgical care or diabetes maintenance, just to name a few. Later, I might visit a pet for in-home services such as massage, medication administration or consultation.

I also spend time on the phone each day communicating with pet owners and their veterinarians to help facilitate treatment plans and to coordinate appointments. I even make trips to a client’s vet to pick up prescription foods or medications. (Hospice care is not a replacement for proper veterinary care, and should be utilized as complementary support based on your veterinarian’s recommendations.)

In one of my recent cases, a very sweet, 14-plus-year-old, three-legged Australian Shepherd named Charlie was diagnosed with both bladder cancer and kidney failure on the same day his owner was to leave town on a 17-day business trip. Charlie was still enjoying a quality life at that point, and his “Mom” wasn’t ready to say goodbye forever.

That’s where I came in.

The owner brought Charlie to me directly from the vet and tearfully said goodbye, not knowing if he would make it until her return. With daily updates, lots of pictures and pouring my heart into Charlie’s daily care, the dog not only survived, but thrived through that stay. He had a checkup with his vet after leaving my house, and his kidney values had improved so much that the doctor reduced his subcutaneous fluids from three times per week to once a week!

This was a dog that would not have had the option to board at a regular boarding facility, and staying at the vet would have been too stressful. Charlie’s “mom” has told me that if it weren’t for my hospice care, she wouldn’t have had any option but to euthanize her sweet pet before either of them was ready.

Charlie has since crossed “the rainbow bridge,” but he and his owner were able to do it on their own terms, in their own time, and in the comfort of their own home.

Stories like Charlie’s are the reason I do what I do. Every animal that I work with becomes a piece of my heart. Each case offers a chance to give my best and to help a family give the best to their beloved pet for as long as possible. I feel compassionate care is one of my strengths, and animal hospice provides me the chance to put that into practice every day.

Through this work I have uncovered a joyful added bonus which I didn’t anticipate. My own human children get to learn firsthand about practicing compassion, a skill that they will carry with them throughout their lives.

So, here I am, doing what I love by caring for animals, utilizing all of my skills and experiencing gratification and fulfillment knowing that something I do helps to bring quality and comfort to my animal clients, for whatever time they have left in this life. It’s a pretty fulfilling feeling! My heart always has room to care for more animals.

Janelle Jewell is the owner/provider at Animal Hospice Services of Northern Michigan. She can offer guidance and assistance with a chronically or terminally ill pet. Her services include hospice consultation, in-home services such as certified massage, medication administration (under the direction of the attending veterinarian), palliative care and exercise, veterinary liaison/transport, respite care, aftercare arrangements and professional referrals. She can be reached at 231.735.3658 or nmphospice@gmail.com or www.nmpethospice.wix.com/animalhospice.
Devon is a graduate from Traverse City Beauty College. She enjoys continuing her education and attending annual hair shows to keep up with the latest trends. She has a passion for highlights, color, and up do’s for all occasions.

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SOMETIMES WE FIND OURSELVES running so fast in our daily lives that we end up on what feels like a treadmill - losing sight of priorities or purpose; focusing only on what's needed to make it through each day – only to wake up and repeat. Recently, after 15+ years of running hard on that treadmill in Silicon Valley, CA, I decided to hit pause and took a sabbatical.

Days quickly filled doing things important to me. I’d pick up my children at the end of the school day and spend quality time with them. I took time to reconnect with people my hectic lifestyle had caused to fall by the wayside. The time off allowed me to reflect on my values, passions and purpose - which in turn sparked some radical change!

I left my job at Google and we moved to Traverse City, closer to family and to raise our children in a place we love. I also started my own business as an Independent Consultant with Rodan + Fields which allows me to be entrepreneurial and live life on my own terms, working hours that fit our schedule. It provides personal growth, challenge, satisfaction - and a check! Rodan + Fields has an amazing support system of training, resources and a network of supportive entrepreneurs helping each other succeed.

After a bout with skin cancer, I realized it's never too late to start taking care of your skin. I’m grateful to help people get the best skin of their lives with clinically proven products that work. Rodan + Fields allows me to build a business around something I’m passionate about and live the lifestyle our family loves in a place we adore.

Allison Cavanaugh is an Independent Consultant for Rodan + Fields, a premium anti-aging skincare company founded by world-renowned dermatologists Dr. Katie Rodan and Dr. Kathy Fields, the creators of Proactiv.*

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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO I was a single mom working two, sometimes three, jobs just to make ends meet. I have always been one not to dwell on the past or to focus on mistakes or undeserved hurts, but rather be thankful for my circumstances. After all, they have made me who I am today.

I knew I was solely responsible for my children. It was up to me to provide a loving, safe, and secure upbringing for them. It is because of them that I learned to work hard, stay focused, and press on, and to know when to walk away.

I started my career as a cosmetologist and put myself through EMT school. I became a licensed EMT and worked my way up into administration within the medical field. I eventually established myself as a professional woman in the corporate arena in the Dallas, Tex., health-care market. I never imagined the twist and turns in the years to come…

Twenty years passed and I took on a part-time job in addition to my already full-time job in order to better my family’s financial situation. I started working at a “mega-church” in the Dallas area. I was very focused on work and my boys at that time and was far from interested in dating anyone. But then I met Wayne, a man who also was working part-time at the church.

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On our first date Wayne told me that he wanted to move back to Michigan and also that he wanted to have a child. I thought he was absolutely crazy! I had two sons and was not interested in expanding my family, nor did I ever want to leave Texas.

As we sat there, I kept questioning myself as to why I ever went out with this guy in the first place. But I guess you could say that God changed my heart in a big way! We got married.

My husband’s desire had always been to return to Traverse City to

Angela Pohl, DO | Jennifer Bowerman, MD

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be closer to his family and the area he grew up in and loved. Upon his retirement and just eight months into our marriage, we made the decision to move “up north.”

Here I was, newly married “city girl” with two teenage sons moving to the country. Talk about culture shock! There were no Starbucks, no sushi bars, not even a chain restaurant located in this town. I kept clicking my red shoes but never made it back home!

After fewer than six months of living in Michigan, our house flooded, my older son went off to college, we struggled with infertility and later suffered our first miscarriage. Although we were blessed with a beautiful daughter a couple of years later, at the time I thought: This is not how things are “supposed to be.”

I believe sometimes it takes God moving us out of our comfort zone so we can lay down our own plans to ultimately follow His plan. I have always had a heart for women and children so I started volunteering in different ministries in the area. The past couple of years have been a time of reflection for me to really see what it is God wants me to do and how I can best serve others, utilizing my experiences and the gifts I have been given.

I finally realized it was the right time to make a complete career change. I had a sense of inspiration, nervousness, excitement and passion. I knew exactly the direction I was to take. I am sure there were some who thought I was crazy to switch gears at this point in my life, but I felt up for the challenge!

“I am sure there were some who thought I was crazy to switch gears at this point in my life.”

I have always had a passion for helping others. So I decided to take my love of helping others, my experience in the corporate world, and my hobby for interior design and house hunting and enter the world of real estate.

Through the encouragement of my sister (a realtor in Ft. Worth), and support of my husband, I began real-estate school. My sister and husband were sworn to secrecy, as I wanted to do this at my own pace, and I wanted to surprise my family about my career change once I finished. I set a goal to finish school, take my state exam, and become a licensed real estate agent by the end of 2015.

I started researching real-estate companies and met with a few brokers before I even obtained my real-estate license. To me, this shift was life-changing, not “just a job,” and I wanted to make the right decision, not only for me, not only for my family, but for the clients I would soon be advising. I wanted to know that I could utilize my gifts in such a way that would enhance the life of others on their own journeys, and adding everything Michigan has to offer: the great outdoors, my love of hunting, the beautiful beaches, the great people who make up Northern Michigan.

So I studied constantly, started interviewing, passed my exam, received three offers, and then accepted an offer by the close of 2015. So far it’s been a great fit.

To me, part of being a woman is to embrace our circumstances—as that is what makes us who we are! I encourage you to reach for that dream and grab it with all your gusto! You will never regret attempting a goal, but you will always regret the “what if” if you never try.

Angie Brown resides in the Grand Traverse Area with her husband, daughter, and many pets. Her older son is a U.S. Army Sergeant, stationed in Georgia with his wife and three children. Her younger son lives in Texas. You can contact her (in between her travels down south) at angiebrown@C21northland.com or 231.313.5699.
When I Married my husband, I wasn't marrying him forever; I was marrying him for today. Having had four stepparents, I didn't believe marriage could last.

I didn't agree to the idea we would “become one.” We were two unique individuals who were sharing a life together, but that life would be wonderful because we were each bringing our individual experiences to it.

My husband and I were married 14 years and were blessed with one beautiful daughter when my world fell apart. I had my dream job in K-12 education when I was told that job was being eliminated. I felt destroyed.

Having come from a broken home, I found school was always my “safe space.” But without my educational career I immediately felt like a little girl afraid to walk into her own house for fear of getting in trouble for random reasons. Every second of every day, I would look over my shoulder and be hyper vigilant about reading body language and facial expressions to determine how badly someone might have taken something I said or did. I didn't believe I was any good for my daughter or my husband; they wouldn't need me because I was so broken. It would be safe to say that neither my husband nor I handled things well during this dark period in our marriage.

Staying unemployed was not an option. I was our family's breadwinner. I immediately dusted off my résumé and scoured the educational vacancies—teacher, principal, assistant principal, assistant superintendent, higher education faculty—anywhere in Michigan. The interviews, calls and then offers, started rolling in.

The problem was that my family didn't want to move. So I accepted a position at Grand Valley State University. I'd be using my doctorate as a full-time, tenure track faculty member teaching educational leadership courses all over the state. I supplemented my income by taking contract opportunities as an educational consultant.

This allowed my family not to have to change. I, on the other hand, was required to put 40,000 miles a year on my car by traveling all over the state to see my students and give each of them quality attention—more attention required to put 40,000 miles a year on my car by traveling all over the state. I didn't believe I was any good for my daughter or my husband; they wouldn't need me because I was so broken. It would be safe to say that neither my husband nor I handled things well during this dark period in our marriage.

Professionally, I was able to get back on track. I enjoyed what I was doing at the college level and took on some extra work at my former K-12 level. It seemed I had the best of both worlds and gained more confidence. School was once again “my safe space.”

But just when I was loving life again, my husband threw me another curve ball. He told me he didn't think we were in love anymore, and he wanted to see if he could “make it on his own.” Unsure of what was happening, I was thrown back into the darkness of not being good enough. My family was thrust into a state of chaos.

When I gave my husband's words some thought, I got angry. What did he mean “we” weren't in love anymore? Hadn't we just spent some family time creating the smile of your dreams today!
I was again looking over my shoulder at every corner, second-guessing every word, every action. This time around my work couldn't even comfort me. I didn't have a safe space—anywhere.

As we contemplated divorce, our daughter began struggling with the normal pangs of adolescence, no doubt exhibiting insecurities and behaviors because of the uncertainty of her family unit. My attention and focus had to turn to my household in order to stabilize our lives and rediscover how much our family meant to us.

In between the days where I couldn't see the forest through the trees, my husband was the one who took the lead in our relationship. It sounds so simple, but to restore our bond, we had to start having honest conversations. Prior to this time, getting my partner to talk was difficult. Suddenly, there was not a topic of conversation that was off limits. He answered every question I had.

We also spent time together—just the two of us. We made each other a priority. My husband used to assume that I didn't like to watch sports so he would go watch them “with the guys.” I assumed he didn't want to go shopping and would go alone. I started watching sports with him, and he insisted we go grocery-shopping together.

Before, I also assumed that cleaning the house would fall on me. I'll never forget the day my husband came home from working a 14-hour shift of road construction. I was on a ladder struggling to figure out how to clean our high ceiling fans. He immediately began helping me. This was completely unexpected, and if I am honest, I felt uncomfortable because I was used to doing things on my own.

Following that, at one point I collapsed, passed out really, due to dehydration and exhaustion. My husband was right there by my side until he was sure I was back on my feet physically. He immediately began helping me. This was completely unexpected, and if I am honest, I felt uncomfortable because I was used to doing things on my own.

In this way and many others, we realized that contributing to a marriage is about strength of character, picking yourself up, owning up to your mistakes and deciding to be a better person.

Miraculously, our marriage improved, which also benefited our daughter. Instead of trying to play each parent off the other, she realized we were a stronger family than before. Now she knows there isn't anything we can't work through together.

My marriage is now also my “safe space.” I still have moments where anxiety fills me, but my husband is there to remind me that I have what I have, what we have, does mean something.

I am still married to that man for today, and I am sure there will be additional moments of upset in my life. But I am hopeful that I will be better able to navigate them knowing that there is finally a balance in my professional and personal life. I am also hopeful I won't forget that I am not alone. It took many years but I've learned there is more than one “safe space” in my world.

Catherine L. Meyer-Looze is an assistant professor of educational leadership at Grand Valley State University, as well as a teaching, learning, and leading specialist at Traverse Bay Intermediate School District. She lives in Traverse City with her husband of 16 years, daughter and two pups. She can be reached at cathy.meyerlooze@gmail.com.
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‘I went from making things look pretty, to making things make sense’

BY KELLI DURANCZYK

NOT IN A MILLION YEARS did I think I would become a part of the insurance world. Every time I heard the word “insurance” I would cringe. Not only did it sound boring—chock full of legal mumbo jumbo—but well…OK, it really just sounded boring.

Working as a graphic designer, I recalled once a year getting that lovely packet of employee benefits flyers, inserts and foldouts. I would toss it to my husband and have him “take care of it.” Woe to him if we didn’t understand the plan he ended up selecting. Sound familiar?

Making these decisions seemed overwhelming and confusing. In-network or out-of-network, blah blah. My husband was the “chart and tables” guy. I was the artistic one. My job as a designer was to break up boring words and charts and made them “pop” so no one fell asleep while reading flyers. My career was about making things look pretty.

A career change
For many years, graphic design fit my lifestyle. The flexible hours served my free spirit. Eventually, however (like most people, I suspect), I began to feel that every project was eerily similar. The exhilaration was gone. There had to be something different.

Blinking past 15 years of graphic design projects and seven moves between four cities and two states, I found myself back in Traverse City with my husband and a toddler. As a stay-at-home mom, which, in my opinion, is hands down the best job in the world, I still did some freelance graphic design. It gave me some connection to adults, but it had definitely lost its luster.

During that time my husband started a business and we found ourselves, for the first time in our adult lives, categorized as “self-insured.” His hectic schedule and workload required him to travel frequently. One day he asked if I could help organize some of the household paperwork. Little did I know what he really meant was “See this stack of health insurance materials? That is your department now.”

I’m pretty sure that no career change ever started like this in the movies, but, for me, this was how my new path was to launch.

Since I knew only the bare minimum about insurance, I asked some of our friends whom they worked with locally. A dear friend referred me to an insurance agent named “Mike.” So I gave Agent Mike a call and set off explaining what benefits my family’s ideal health insurance plan should include and what I thought should be the reasonable cost range that it should fall within.

In good nature, Mike chuckled and asked if I wanted to have it all but be “insurance poor.” I wasn’t sure what he meant, but I wanted the best for my family that we could afford. After all, who doesn’t?

I was sure I would drive this man insane, questioning the various options and the terminology: co-insurance, out-of-pocket maximums, flexible spending accounts... I felt like I was staring at one of those 3D images looking for the hidden picture!

With the guidance of this seasoned agent and his plain English explanations, my family’s health insurance picture finally came into focus. It clicked for me when insurance was presented in basic terms. Suddenly the common-sense phrases made everything relatable, and not the overwhelming beast that I thought it was.

Mike even showed me how to save money and get the best deal for the insurance my family actually needed. I cringed when I realized how much we spent on insurance coverage in the past that we never needed.

Shortly after we signed on with a plan, the agent asked if I’d be interested in learning more about health insurance and offered me a position. He noted my sincerity in wanting to help others understand insurance, while keeping them from being “insurance poor” like we had been.

I had no experience and honestly didn’t savor the idea of studying to pass an exam, as college was a faded memory. I questioned my ability to commit any time to study for tests with a toddler at home and a spouse who frequently traveled for work. Again, unlike the movies, there was no dramatic scene to usher me onto this new journey, just a little “OK” and a handshake and off to a new career I went.

A few years later, with my agent’s exam under my belt and Mike in my corner, I realized I found that missing “something” from my prior career. Whether working with an individual, family or a company, I experience a sense of fulfillment when someone “gets it,” and I’ve helped match a plan with a client’s lifestyle or life challenge. That is when I know I have served someone well.

I never saw this career move coming. Through this major switch I went from making things look pretty, to making things make sense. But it’s all for the better.

For once my husband was absolutely right... Health insurance is my department!

Kelli Duranczyk is an insurance agent at Grand Traverse Insurance Group, which specializes in individual, family, group benefits, marketplace and Medicare. Kelli can be reached at kelli@grandtraverseinsurancegroup.com or 231.943.1360.

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NEW

Grand Traverse Pavilions has announced the appointment of Deborah Barry-Allen as executive director of the Grand Traverse Pavilions Foundation. She is responsible for planning and executing the organization’s development and fundraising operations in support of the community-based, community-focused mission of Grand Traverse Pavilions. She holds a Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, degree from Millersville University of Pennsylvania. She served as a lieutenant in the United States Naval Reserves as an administrative officer and is a Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE) by the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

Jennifer Hutchinson has been named marketing communications and community outreach director for the Pavilions. In her new capacity, she is responsible for developing and managing comprehensive integrated marketing communications and outreach campaigns to support the Grand Traverse Pavilions’ mission, including launching PACE (Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) in Northern Michigan. Hutchinson is a graduate of Michigan State University with a Bachelor of Arts, Advertising, and earned a Master of Liberal Sciences with a Bachelor of Arts, Advertising, from Ferris State University. She has over 15 years of experience in the marketing and advertising industry and has assisted in starting several businesses.

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www.grandtraverseinsurancegroup.com, 231.943.1360

Rose Zivkovich is the new director of SCRAP TC. “This is a great opportunity for me to give back to the community and at the same time teach my children the importance of reducing waste by creatively reusing materials. I plan to expand our retail store hours, involve new and much needed volunteers, increase awareness of our programs and offer craft classes for all ages to encourage creative reuse.” Zivkovich earned her MBA from Walsh College in Troy. SCRAP TC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. They take donations of clean, reusable materials that would normally wind up in the waste stream and make them available to teachers, crafters, kids, families, artists—everyone! SCRAP TC diverted 8,700 pounds of usable material from the waste stream in 2015. 821 Garfield Ave., Traverse City, www.scraptc.org

The Bay Area Transportation Authority (BATA) has selected Kelly Yaroch-Dunham as its new executive director. Yaroch-Dunham most recently served as BATA’s director of operations and human resources. She earned her undergraduate degree from Michigan State University and a mini-MBA certificate from Ferris State University. Yaroch-Dunham’s priorities in 2016 include conducting a community-needs assessment to gather input on BATA’s current and future service to help plan for what people want from public transit in the region. 231.941.2324, www.bata.net

Northern Lakes Financial Services, with offices in Traverse City and Alden, has launched a new name and new brand: Craig Wealth Advisors is an independent firm with securities offered through Raymond James Financial Services, Inc. Debbie Craig, CFP, MBA, CRPS, is the firm’s branch manager. Prior to being a financial advisor with Raymond James, Craig worked at Smith Barney as a second vice president, wealth management and for General Motors as the capital management director for Oldsmobile. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Kalamazoo College and a Master of Business Administration from Northwestern University. 231.331.5500, www.craigwealthadvisors.com

Jennifer Lynn Bowling, AGNP-C, has joined Traverse Health Clinic as an adult/elder adult nurse practitioner. She received the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from Grand Valley State University and holds additional degrees from Ferris State University, Northwestern Michigan College and Gogebic Community College. Bowling has also taught part-time as adjunct faculty at Northern Michigan College and served on a variety of health committees. She joins Traverse Health Clinic with a focus on adult primary care and is accepting new patients. 3147 Logan Valley Rd., Traverse City, www.facebook.com/traversehealthclinic, www.traversehealthclinic.org

The Hair Code Salon has opened its doors at 901 W. Front St, Suite B, Studio 5 in the Slabtown neighborhood of Traverse City. Sally Smarsty and her stylist husband Chad, are excited to be opening their new shop. “We love that both men and women feel welcome at The Hair Code Salon. Husbands and wives, mothers and daughters—they all walk out with a style they love,” Sally said. The salon offers full color service and cuts for women as well as full color, cuts and fades for men. Chad has over 15 years of experience in the hair industry and is always keeping up with the latest trends in hair coloring and cutting.

CENTURY 21 NORTHLAND announces the addition of Katie Leonard and Angie Brown to its growing team of Realtors. A love of travel, water and exploring led Leonard to the Traverse City Area six years ago. “My knowledge and love for the area have allowed me to become a dependable resource to my clients for places to explore, visit and eventually call home,” said Leonard. Brown takes a proactive approach to staying current with market trends in order to deliver results for her clients. “I am proud to be able to offer my clients premium marketing and networking services to help them sell their homes,” she said. angie.brown@c21northland.com, 231.313.5699; katie.leonard@c21northland.com, 231.632.6186

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on the latest trends and techniques.

KUDOS

Jennifer Richards, human resources and volunteer services manager at Interlochen Center for the Arts, has earned the credential, “Certified in Volunteer Administration” (CVA) by the Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration. It is awarded after a process that includes an extensive self-evaluation, preparation of a performance-based portfolio and a two-hour examination testing for knowledge, application and analysis of skills related to volunteer resources management. www.interlochen.org

CENTURY 21 NORTHLAND’S Renae Hansen has been named to the board of directors as secretary for “Bras for a Cause” for 2016. The annual fundraising event in Traverse City, presented by the Women’s Council of Realtors (WCR), supports Munson Healthcare Mammography, having raised $24,000 in 2015. Hansen has been a member of WCR for five years. Molly Buttleman was officially sworn in as the President of Women’s Council of Realtors (WCR). As the chief officer of WCR’s Northern Michigan Chapter, she will be presiding at the governing board and chapter meetings for 2016. Buttleman serves the Northern Michigan real estate market from Century 21 Northland’s downtown Traverse City office. molly@21northland.com, 231.929.7900, www.c21northland.com

Chris Jonkhoff-Hater and Lindsey (Jonkhoff) Rogers, sixth generation funeral directors with the Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home, recently qualified for recertification of the designation of Certified Funeral Service Practitioner by the Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice.

TBA Credit Union has made a donation on behalf of its staff to Michael’s Place. Each year TBACU’s staff votes for a non-profit organization within the five-county area, which will receive a donation from the holiday party raffle. Michael's Place was selected as the recipient of the $1,031 raised by TBACU staff in 2015. “Michael’s Place does amazing work for the families of our community,” said Abby Smith, human resources director for TBACU. TBACU also just launched Box Top Challenge 2016. They are collecting Box Tops for Education at both TBACU Branches until September 2016. Schools are encouraged to participate by having their principal register at tbacu.com. Once a school is registered their photo is added to our Facebook page. The picture that receives the most likes will win all collected Box Tops. 231.946.7090, www.tbacu.com

The Board of Directors of Child and Family Services/Third Level has announced the appointment of Lisa Wyatt Knowlton, Ph.D., as chief executive officer. Knowlton is a native of Traverse City and a Central High School graduate. She has been a management advisor and a principal of her firm, Phillips Wyatt Knowlton, Inc., since 2003. She is the author of The Logic Model Guidebook: Better Strategies for Great Results. Knowlton earned her education doctorate with specialties in management and policy along with an M.S. in public administration from Western Michigan University. She holds a B.A. in international relations from James Madison College at Michigan State University and is a W.K. Kellogg National Leadership Fellow.
GTW NETWORK NITE
Wednesday, March 9
O’ Party: Let’s have a wee bit o’ fun!

Join us for a Network Nite so close to St. Patrick’s Day that we decided ye better get decked out in green. Enjoy a chinwag with friends, networking, food & a pint o’ beer. Enjoy food by Catering by Kelly’s, drinks by Right Brain Brewery, cake by Aunt B, and music by Tim Davis at Executive Sounds.

WEAR: Wear a little o’ the green to the shenanigans. (Best dressed wins a prize!)

PRIZES: Attendees can bring a prize to giveaway - ye get a few moments at the mic. It’s a chance to put a face to a name in the local community. Showcase ye business in a fun, easy way and let a little of ye personality shine through! Email Kandace@grandtraversewoman.com to get on the list. Limited to 10 prizes.

THE GRAND PRIZE: As part of Liv’s new branding, they are celebrating their four pillars: Liv connected, Liv interactively, Liv actively, and Liv sustainably. The grand prize will be a basket representing these four pillars, including a FitBit and Right Brain Brewery tour (t-shirt and goodies)!

LOCATION: Liv Arbors (formerly Arbors of Traverse), 2955 Legget Drive, Traverse City (off Hartman Road)

TICKETS: Your ticket includes wine, food and laughter. Tickets are $15 each or 2/$20. Thank you to our Corporate Sponsor Credit Union One and Supporting Sponsors Precision Plumbing & Heating, The Spa at the Inn at Bay Harbor, 293 and TV 7 & 4. Visit www.grandtraversewoman.com to join us.

GTW NETWORK NITE
Wednesday, April 13
The Power of Less Stuff & More Time
Speaker: Ty Schmidt

Is your life crazy? Are you never home? Do you miss your kids, your husband, your friends? Maybe it’s time to step back and reassess what you want, really want, in life.

Meet Ty Schmidt, the founder of the bike group, Norte! Everyone in TC has seen Ty wheeling around: he’s the guy on his bike in all types of weather. And he’s usually got a bunch of kids trailing along behind him too. Ty doesn’t have a TV or an iPad. He chooses to live without a driver’s license and he runs his iPhone 4 on wi-fi only. He lives on a part-time paycheck—he job shares as a physical therapist at Munson with his wife—so that they can both be home raising their two young boys. In a nutshell, Ty’s motto is less stuff, more time. We like his motto.

Come to our April 13th GTW Woman luncheon to hear how Ty has built a life around the things that matter and how you can too. Stop being consumed by work and gadgets, and ditch that nagging feeling that you “should” be doing something else. This luncheon is about finding your happy place and finding a new path. Join us and hear Ty’s story.

Ty founded Norte! with his wife Johanna in the fall of 2013 to advocate for more active, engaged, and bikes-for-life young people in Traverse City. They helped organize the inaugural Traverse City Bike To School Day in the spring of 2015 which boasted 635 bikes at 19 different area schools. They have also helped start up many bike-tastic programs in Traverse City: The Commuting Library, a books-by-bike project in partnership with TADL; TC Rides, a summertime slow roll in town; and a network of 15 bike trains to 6 different schools. Find Norte! at http://elgruponorte.org.

The GTW Woman luncheon is 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Hagerty Center in Traverse City. We also have vendor booths available at the event for $185 (includes 2 lunch tickets). Thank you to our series sponsors TBA Credit Union and GTOC and our supporting sponsors TV 7 & 4, Lite 96, Fox Grand Traverse, Northwood Animal Hospital, Sarah Brown Photography and SCORE. Lunch tickets are $25 or 2 for $45. Visit www.grandtraversewoman.com for tickets or to sign up to be a vendor. We hope you’ll join us!
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Grand Traverse Woman

HOUSE RULES:
1) Mom’s the BOSS
2) See rule #1

Place your business ad in our GTWoman’s May/June Motherhood Issue to get noticed by the BOSS!
WE HAVE A JOB CHART at our house that details pretty basic chores. We don’t do an allowance since it is all teamwork. But temptations exist outside of our teamwork…so Brook has bigger plans. Her goal is to earn $100 to cover the adoption fee, a few new toys and a bed for a new kitty. That meant we had to change things up a bit since 10-year olds fall under pesky labor laws. After heated debate, we finally agreed upon some paid chores that took current chores above and beyond. This would be a good lesson in merit pay and also, perhaps, delay an uptick in cat hair until spring!

JOB #1: Clean the litter boxes two times in one week. Not two clumps out at one time. Not two swishes to make it sound like it is being cleaned. But a thorough swashbuckling of both litter boxes on Monday of each week and again on Thursday. Yes, it feels like Monday just happened, Brook. That’s why working folks don’t like Mondays. This job has not been a top earner.

JOB #2: Run a load of laundry. She can do this for the most part, but there is a kicker. Wash it, dry it, fold it and…wait for it…put it away. And by that I mean not have it sit precariously on the arm of the couch for two-and-a-half days until a small explosion escapes from her mother to remind Brook to get’er done. So the real meat of the job is actually to put her pristine clothes away in that sacred place called a drawer. In our house we have a code for impending explosions: it’s whenever I yell the word “DRAWERS!” It means those drawers better be organized and clothes out of sight. I’ve only had to holler it once or twice for the last few weeks, which is a good change!

JOB #3: Prep dinner from start to finish with an adult. This one is my favorite! I’ve had the treat of sitting on the couch (where there was NO cascading laundry pile on the arm!) while watching Brook and Jeff make a meal from start to finish. It involves her sitting a lot on the countertop and singing while Jeff stirs things on the stove. But still, I don’t have to make dinner and she gets in on the action. And I only have to pay $2 to sit on my couch for a half hour!

JOB #4: Walk Bobby one extra mile. I already give the pup her daily walk when kids are at school…so to amp it up to a mile after school with her BFF? This is clearly Bobby’s favorite job. However, when you add in deep snow and Brook’s love for doing cartwheels everywhere she goes, they have yet to get a few hundred yards because Brook gets too dizzy and/or stuck. So this one is actually all play, no work = no money.

JOB #5: The biggest one of all: When given the opportunity to choose between water or pop…choose water. This job is a bit unique as it tests her willpower. Is that even a “job?” Of course it is. Anyone who’s been faced with the temptation of a crisp, cool Mountain Dew knows it’s the worst job of all. This job should pay the highest, but in fact has had no pay out at all.

Brook has earned an extra $18 over the last month. She has a thermometer chart showing her inching her way to $100 with incremental notes such as “Just getting started” (smiley face) and “Almost halfway-halfway!” (double smiley face).

We will see if she gets to bring home a new kitten this spring. The jobs aren’t going anywhere, but I have a sneaking suspicion she might start to hire subcontractors to get it done quicker. (See Job #3.) I’ll keep offering up water vs. pop and hoping for clean litter boxes in preparation for three litter boxes this spring!
A NIGHT at the MALL

IT WAS A SATURDAY NIGHT in February. It had rained for two days, leaving the snow hard and ugly. We had just finished a game of Sorry in which someone (me) had tossed the board into the air before it was over. The cat was howling at the back door to go out. She had just come in. The dog was following me room to room and wedging herself under my feet wherever I sat. In a nutshell, we were all coming down with a bad case of Cabin Fever.

So I floated the idea: “Let’s go to the mall.” Every male in the room protested. “We’ll buy new swim trunks for spring break,” I cajoled.

“Naw, I’m good,” the 11, 13 and 42 year olds said.


“What are you even saying?” my husband asked.

He was right.

I regrouped. They weren’t interested in clothes shopping. I had to go big.

“How about Sbarro pizza?” I went for the throat (literally). This was a 1,000-calorie offer video they were making.

“And a Dairy Queen malt?” I went for the boy who couldn’t think fast enough to protest.

“I’m in!” the boys chimed.

Tim couldn’t think fast enough to protest. I had played dirty and won. The boys were already in the car waiting for the rarely visited case of Cabin Fever.

We entered the food court and laid eyes on the selection at Target, not much else.

The boys went crazy. There were video games and music and movies to peruse. But, worse, there was all kinds of merchandise from said video games. Blankets, backpacks, stuffed animals, shirts, hats, every logo item you could dream of.

Everywhere I turned, it was Star Wars or Pokemon or something with hulking men and blazing guns. I was in a Mom nightmare. But I had asked for it. I stood and faced the music and offered to buy them each one little thing.

This is when Tim balked.

“You’re just buying something because?”

This act was unheard of in Tim’s world. (Well known in my world.)

“Yes,” I said. “It’s called shopping. Try it.” With some effort, we found a used Garth Brooks CD from 1992, the year we started dating. Memory lane, priceless, I said! A price tag of $3.99 was a little on the high side, Tim said. So I floated the idea: “Let’s go to the mall.”

We did the full circuit: Putting pennies in the gumballs out of the 25-cent tower of machines. It was a good 10 or 15 minutes of fun and we were out 52 cents more. Economical fun.

Of course the most fun of all was strolling down the main corridor of the mall. Where there’s room to run and skip and swirl and ignore your parents’ warnings, especially on a Saturday evening when the rest of the world has a life.

We did the full circuit: Putting pennies in the big circular thing that drops them down a hole, entering to win an ATV, sitting in the massage chairs but not turning them on and getting gumballs out of the 25-cent tower of machines. It was a good 10 or 15 minutes of fun and we were only out $52 cents more. Economical fun for a family of four! I felt close to philosophical at this point.

THE CLOTHING

But I couldn’t stand it. I had to do a little of the actual thing I came for: clothes shopping. And, more to the point, I actually needed a new sports bra.

I know, I know. Why would I shop for undergarments with my boys? Because I don’t have any girls, that’s why, and while it wasn’t ideal, it was gonna have to do. (Said the voice in my head as I debated if I should do this.)

When we rounded the corner at Macy’s and entered the lingerie department, I felt a heat crawl up my neck and face. But I was role-modeling a healthy lifestyle of working out and the boys could just take it in stride! (Said in my head again, louder this time.)

The boys fell about themselves in giggles and I grabbed a couple to try on in the fitting room, escaping the scene.

I narrowed my choices with a swift and mighty hand, as I knew all three were waiting on me. It was nothing like shopping with my mother back in the day, when we could take half an afternoon to settle between two colors of the same shirt, then buy both.

Tim found a chair to camp out in, but the boys disappeared a few departments over.

Come to find out, they were busy making Vine videos of each other browsing women’s clothing, walking into mirrors and mispronouncing signs. (Example: Fitting rooms were recast as “fighting rooms.” And as I fought my way in and out of last year’s size, I had to agree.)

They were having a blast. And the videos they finished were even funny for a change.

I was delighted. We were all laughing: everyone had a goody to take home and the boys had created some of their finest 6-second Vine videos ever. Success! One last stop for that promised DQ malt and we headed home.
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Disclaimer: No pets were served alcohol during the making of this ad.
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