

Erin Parrish at MBW Winter Meeting



Erin Parrish is the incoming Interim Executive Director at the Minnesota Women's Consortium, a network of 150 organizations committed to achieving and maintaining women's justice and equality. She has a B.A. in Women's Studies from Hamline University with a minor in sociological studies and is currently

pursuing a Master's in Leadership at Augsburg College. Parrish authored the *Minnesota Women's Action Plan, Generations*, encyclopedia entries on prominent feminists, articles in the *Minnesota Women's Press*, and co-authored *The Political Equality Club of Minneapolis: She Will Marvel that it Should be Possible*, an article in *Minnesota History Quarterly* about the first woman's suffrage organization in Minnesota. Parrish's feminist identity and perspectives have been shaped and influenced by her rural upbringing as well as Buddhist and vegan philosophy. She hopes to create gender equity and justice by inspiring women and men to lead the path to equality in their local communities.

Erin will be discussing not only the history and current status of the Minnesota Women's Consortium but also her role with the Vision 2020 project.

The Minnesota Women's Consortium is the only one of its kind in the country. As a statewide collaboration of 160+ member organizations, the Consortium serves as a resource center to enhance equality and justice for women and children. The Consortium helps women working for progressive social change stay in touch. As a clearinghouse, the Consortium keeps member organizations informed on issues pertinent to their work, increasing members' strength and impact. The Minnesota Women's Consortium hosts events that feature speakers affiliated with our member organizations and are supportive of our founding principles. MWC member organizations and individuals members are committed to feminist goals not in conflict with those in the Houston Plan of Action (U.N. Decade of Women 1977) and the Beijing Conference (1995). No member organization is likely to take a stand on all of these issues, member groups are not required to endorse all of those issues, and our meetings and publica-

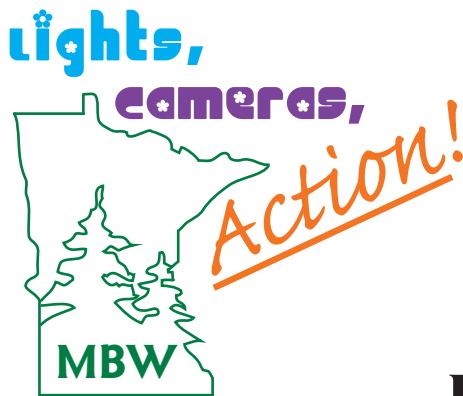
tions are open. However, pursuant to the bylaws of the Minnesota Women's Consortium, membership cannot be extended to groups actively working in opposition to any of these goals. The same applies to speakers at and sponsors of MWC events and programs. Since 1981, Minnesota women have come to the Consortium with concerns and proposed solutions. The Consortium has supported and helped many vital organizations that work toward heightened awareness on women's issues, sound public policy, and ultimately, full equality for women.

Vision 2020 is a national initiative developed by the Institute for Women's Health and Leadership at Drexel University College of Medicine to make equality a national priority through shared leadership among women and men. Its first public event was held Oct. 21-22, 2010, when a congress of national delegates, representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia, gathered at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia to launch a campaign to move America toward equality by 2020, the centennial celebration of the 19th Amendment.

Calendar

2012

- January 20 Winter Packet Report deadline
- January 27-28 Winter Meeting
Hilton Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport Mall of America
- March 5 Publication copy deadline
. Spring Issue of *Minnesota Business Woman*
- April 17 Equal Pay Day
- April 21 Convention Packet Report deadline
- May 4. Executive Committee Meeting
- May 4-5 Annual Meeting
. Sawmill Inn, Grand Rapids



Jordahl-Bubacz

President Susan

Happy New Year!

"For last year's words belong to last year's language and next year's words await another voice." — T..S. Eliot

In our Grand Rapids club we have a standing joke about an apron. We've shared a lot of good laughter this past year over apron jokes. But, I got to thinking, it's interesting how such a simple object can become emblematic. An apron and it's proverbial 'strings' are metaphoric for many things ... a child leaving home, cutting the ties that bind, a symbol of 'Leave it to Beaver' mom-dom of yesteryear. Of women, of sufferage, and the flip, the positive side of plain old reminiscence of grandma, warm aromas, good cookin' and being/coming home.

Having gone through some pretty tough times on the personal front this past year with illness' in the family, and over the years with friends, family, neighbors and community folks and kids I work with... I had an epiphany! I realized that in difficult times I don't hesitate for a minute! I proceed to tie one on! Smile, an apron that is! When I hear bad news, I make a beeline for the kitchen as soon as I can, even if it's two in the morning. (Why stay in bed if you can't sleep, the clock's a'tickin'. And, man that gets annoying.) So, when there are simply no words, I hope that warm noodles and sauce or sugar, butter, flour, eggs, spices and a little dash of that special spice called love will say how much I care, silently, but sincerely, say all that is in my heart.

Silly goose that I am, I can't tell you how many casseroles, pies, cookies have been produced and given from my kitchen to folks needing a little tender lovin', caring and a wee showing of faith. Gosh, I guess I've never really thought about it at all ... it's just what I do. Hmmm, I guess I'm a doer by nature.

This is also how I see the women of Minnesota Business Women ... we are the 'doers' in life. This is one of the common bonds that tie us together. For generations, women have supported each other through difficult times. Some rush to the side of a friend in crisis, giving generously of their time and good advice. Others will take a down-in-the-dumps friend kicking and screaming out to play - to dinner, a movie, a night on the dance floor. And, some of us 'tie one on' and let our friends know we are certainly there if or when they need us ... one cookie away. For in the cookie of life, friends are the chocolate chips! And when the chips are down, there

is simply nothing like a friend who will do her best to give you a hand up.

So, as we enter the new year, I ask you what kind of chip are you? Sweet, creative and unique like butterscotch? Understated, but elegant, noble and sincere like white? Well above average, smooth, worldly and 'go-to' like milk chocolate, or sassy, make a statement, the world is your oyster like dark chocolate? As sisters in this thing we call womanhood, we know we are all different and it takes all types. Yet, we share similarities ... especially of purpose and of doing/getting things accomplished for the better. This is what makes the recipe of working women working together so good! This is one of the base ingredients that makes our state organization so appetizing, meaningful, rewarding and heart-warmingly gratifying. This is who we are, and why we come together... We are the Business Women of Minnesota. We are amazing and resilient.

Again, the *lights, cameras and 'action'* are on you ... Carpe Diem! Seize each day in this New Year and make it good, make it yours.

Grandma used to say.... *"A man/woman's character is their fate." "Personality can open doors, but only character can keep them open."* Grandma and Helen Keller, *"Character cannot be developed with ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired and success achieved."* *"In attempts to improve your character, know what is your power and what is beyond."*

Finally, Grandma and Bette Davis, *"If you want anything done well, get a couple of old broads to do it."*

Leadership Directory Change:

Please note the following change in address & phone numbers below.

Past State Presidents

1992-1993

E Irene Theis
Osseo Commons
10 6th St NW
Osseo, Mn 55369
H/W/F: 763.273.4984
C: 763.355.2631
evairene@comcast.net
evairene19@gmail.com

PE's Message

President Elect Pam DeMarce



As we come to the end of a year and start a new year it gives us time to reflect on our future. At our Winter Meeting we will continue the discussions started at the Fall Meeting. These are important discussions so the more of us who can be in attendance, the better. We would like to have as many voices as possible be part of this

process. With all the technology we have to work with, I am continually amazed at what the women of the 1900's achieved when it was harder to communicate as quickly and efficiently as we can today.

Vicki Jensen, our Legislation Chair, along with Beth Gibson-Lilja and Holly Morey, are working hard to put together an informative Friday afternoon, Friday night and Saturday program. Please bring as many of your members to this meeting as possible to learn and take back to our locals.

The 2012 year will again be a challenging year for us, but I have great confidence we will continue to move forward as an organization working on the issues that are important to women and families.

PACKET DEADLINE

Friday
January 20, 2012

Send to Pam at:
pam@wowzonefec.com

Drag. Drop. Done.

Simply drag and drop photos into exclusively designed templates. Add your story and then upload for us to print as many copies as you wish. Contact me today to learn how to get your free download.

Beth Gibson Lilja
Independent Consultant
5308 St Croix Ave N
Golden Valley, MN 55422
Office: (612) 616-1215
bethlilja@hotmail.com

**CREATIVE
MEMORIES**
your life | your story | your way
www.creativememories.com

Forget Resolutions!

Linda Laitala, Past State Presidents' Communication Chair

At the beginning of each New Year I take a physical and mental inventory of myself. I make a list of the things I like and the things I don't like. The "Don't Like" list is always longer than the "Like" list.

Like so many others I then make a list of my New Year's Resolutions. My lists in the past have looked like this:

- Lose weight
- Listen more, talk less
- Save money
- Lose weight (this is not listed twice by accident, I really mean it.)

Sometimes my lists are longer; sometimes they're not as long. But one thing about them all is that I'm filled with enthusiasm and commitment on January 1st. Yep, I'm on track and making things happen. By January 20th, however, the enthusiasm is a thing of the past and I'm back on donuts again.

So why am I telling you this?

This year I'm suggesting we throw out New Year Resolutions. Instead let's resolve (as in *decide firmly* - Webster) to become a more interesting and informed person. Let's become the kind of person we'd like to hang around with.

Where do we start?

First, by hanging around people who are interesting and listening to them. By attending the monthly meetings of your local Business Women's club and getting involved. If your programs are boring, volunteer to be on the program committee and *resolve* to make them so interesting they'll teach members something they didn't know and will attract new members as well.

You could even go out on a limb and invite guests to attend. *Resolve* to meet new people and become more interesting. Hmmm. It just might work.

A & A

INSURANCE SERVICES Inc.
Independent & Experienced

Corporate Employee Benefit Planning
Individual Insurance Planning

Anne Andreasen

763-476-6033 anne@a-a-insurance.com
www.a-a-insurance.com

PRESTO PRINT

for ALL of your paper and printing needs!

Paula Hritz-Nobs & Faye Crane
(218) 326-6200

prestoprint@qwestoffice.net
1235 South Pokegama Avenue
Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744

Call to Winter Meeting

The Minnesota Business Women's Winter Meeting will be held at the Hilton Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport Mall of America, Bloomington, MN, Friday, January 27, and Saturday, January 28, 2012. The registration form can be found on page 7 of this publication. The registration form is due January 20, 2012, with the hotel deadline on January 13, 2012. The agenda can be found to the right. Please note that this is a special meeting and only those items on the agenda can be discussed or voted on. Should you have an item you would like to see on this agenda, please send it to me by January 5. (This is an absolute deadline. As per the bylaws, there is a specific turn-around time frame for me to get it out to all the local presidents.) Please email me at sjbubacz@msn.com, or mail to PO Box 432, Bovey, MN 55709.

This meeting focuses on our commitment to change and legislative happenings. I encourage all members of all locals to attend. These meetings are very important to our organization overall. In the very least, one - two officers / members from each local should plan on attending. Networking and keeping abreast first hand of what has been happening in the state and at each local are truly important to our mission. YOU are part of 'we' and 'we' continue to make a difference for women, families and children when it comes to law making in our state, as well as nationally. Thus, I will say it again, YOU are very important to this meeting and organization. In your role as a Minnesota Business Woman, by attending this meeting, you can learn how you can further make a difference and incite/be part of positive change for all working women.

In addition, any written report can be provided for the meeting packet. Reports are due to President Elect Pam DeMarce by Friday, January 20, 2012. Reports should be sent email if at all possible to Pam at: pam@wowzonefec.com. Or mailed to: Pam DeMarce at 11 Oriole Place, North Mankato, MN 56003-2326

In conclusion, please plan on attending; it's going to be a great meeting! Again, this meeting focuses on Legislative

items. Beth, Holly, Pam and Vicki have been working hard to obtain great speakers on this topic for the meeting and to show the Minnesota Business Women's involvement in legislative issues. Also, it offers further means to learn what we can do as locals and individuals to make a difference on the fore-front of law making, the law making that affects our work place, our families, friends, and us on a daily basis!

As always, we look forward to being updated by each local in person as to what you have been doing in your communities, your goals and to all of us networking together! (We always have positive, not to mention, quality time together with these updates!) We look forward to updating you on happenings statewide and nationally, along with our items of interest regarding Minnesota Business Women's upcoming meetings and initiatives. When it's time to say goodbye after this great legislative meeting, we hope that through sharing and learning, that we will have accomplished feeding and nurturing our minds, as individuals, friends and professionals. We hope that this well-spent time will have you leaving with a smile on your face and in your heart, and will help make you all the wiser for having attended.

Warmest regards for a Wonderful New Year to you and yours!

Susan Jordahl-Bubacz, MBW President

Winter Meeting Tentative Agenda

Friday, January 27, 2012

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Trip to Capitol (Cost is \$8/person paid at time of tour) For further info, see page 5.
3:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Room set aside for Legislators to meet with us
5:00 pm – 7:00 pm	Executive Committee Meeting
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm	Registration/Check-in
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm	Networking / Collaboration Exhibits – snacks & cash bar

Saturday, January 28, 2012

8:00 am – 9:00 am	Registration/Check-in
9:00 am – 11:00 am	Erin Parrish, keynote speaker, Women's Consortium and the Vision 2020 Project
11:00 am – 11:45 am	Round Table Discussions
11:45 am – Noon	Check out of room
Noon – 1:00 pm	Lunch, Speaker - TBD
1:00 pm – 1:15 pm	Break
1:15 pm – 3:30 pm	Business Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports • BPW Foundation programs [ID, YC, etc.] • Future of MBW • EPW

MINNESOTA BUSINESS WOMAN

- **ADVERTISING:** *Minnesota Business Woman*, the official publication of Minnesota Business Women is published four times each year (August, October, December, and March). Ads are welcome, but *Minnesota Business Woman* reserves the right to refuse advertising that does not meet the standards of the organization and this magazine. For ad rates, contact the editor.
- **ARTICLES & PHOTOS:** Submissions for the *Minnesota Business Woman* are welcome from both local organizations and individual members.
- **Articles** are subject to editing for space availability, clarity, etc.
- **Photos** are appreciated. High resolution digital photos are preferred, but regular photos may also be submitted by postal mail.
- Contact: Faye Crane or Paula Hritz-Nobs, editors
e-mail preferred: prestoprint@qwestoffice.net
PO Box 404, Grand Rapids, MN 55744 • Phone: 218-326-6200
- **NEXT DEADLINE:** March 5 for Spring 2012 issue.

A Keeper

*Their marriage was good, their dreams focused.
Their best friends lived barely a wave away.*

I can see them now,

Dad in trousers, work shirt and a hat;

And Mom in a house dress,

Lawn mower in one hand, and dish-towel in the other.

It was the time for fixing things:

A curtain rod, the kitchen radio, screen door,

The oven door, the hem in a dress.

Things we keep.

It was a way of life, and sometimes it made me crazy .

All that re-fixing, re-heating leftovers, renewing;

I wanted just once to be wasteful. Waste meant affluence.

Throwing things away meant you knew there'd always be more.

But when my mother died, and I was standing in that clear

morning light in the warmth of the hospital room,

I was struck with the pain of learning

That sometimes there isn't any more.

*Sometimes, what we care about most gets all used up
and goes away ... never to return.*

*So.... While we have it, it's best we love it... And care for it...
And fix it when it's broken... And heal it when it's sick.*

This is true: For marriage... And old cars...

And children who misbehave at times...

Dogs and cats with bad hips...

And aging parents...

And grandparents.

We keep them because they are worth it,

Because we are worth it.

Some things we keep,

Like a best friend that moved away

Or a classmate we grew up with.

There are just some things that make life important,

Like people we know who are special...

And so, we keep them close!

Women's History Tour

Compare women's roles in government in 1905 to their roles today and hear the journeys traveled by many women to make those changes.

We have set up a special theme tour, not the regular tour, for the State Capitol. This tour is specifically for us. We will meet at the capitol rotunda at 1 p.m. The cost per person is \$8.00, payable at the start of the tour.

We hope to have as many members as possible take advantage of this opportunity. See you on Friday, January 27th, at 1:00 p.m.

Vicki Jensen, Legislation Chair

Stuck? Stressed? Unsure?

Diane J. Norland

Resourcer, Coach and Consultant

(507) 387-1304 • djnorl@hickorytech.net

www.djnorland.com

*A good leader inspires us to have confidence
in him or her. A great leader inspires us to have
confidence in ourselves.*



Susan Jordahl-Bubacz

Free Lance Writer

Grant Writer

218-259-4455

sjbubacz@msn.com

Executive Director

Bovey/Coleraine Youth Center

after school enrichment and life skills

E. Irene Theis

Health/Nutrition Consultant
"Changing Lives for the Better"

— ASK FOR FREE CD —



If you want to live Younger Longer, I can help!

Youngevity
ESSENTIAL LIFE SCIENCES

763-273-4984
evairene@comcast.net
www.irenetheis.com

State Farm®

Providing Insurance and Financial Services

Home Office, Bloomington, Illinois 61710



Janet Symons, Agent

3502 Shoreline Drive, PO Box 6

Navarre, MN 55392-0006

Bus 952-471-0491

Fax 952-471-0870

janet.symons.b090@statefarm.com



The greatest compliment you can give is a referral.



News from around the State

DALA OF MORA BW

Chris Randt, president

Greetings and Happy Holidays from Dala of Mora Business Women!

We are off to a good start with our membership building goal. We have five new members already! The annual NBWW Celebration was a big success again for us. This event is our scholarship fundraiser and we will be able to award three \$500 scholarships for next year. We also had a fabulous speaker from the Dorothy Molter Museum in Ely, MN. She was very entertaining and interesting. Looking ahead, we have our Christmas get together next Monday. We have invited past and present scholarship winners to give them a glimpse of what our organization is all about and share some holiday cheer. Then we plan to start the first meeting of the new year with a speaker on organization and start the New Year off right! March is our annual "Girl's Night Out" and we are going with the "Lights, Camera, Action" theme and plan to have a Hollywood night with some great entertainment. Mark your calendars for March 26th if you would like to attend, we welcome any and all! At this event, we raise money for our local battered women's shelter, The Refuge, collect food for the food pantry and support a Kids mentoring program formally known as F.I.S.H. ■

FERGUS FALLS BPW

Jenny Konrad & Linda Hauge, co-presidents

Fergus Falls is having a fantastic year. We completed our 2nd annual cheese ball fundraiser. Our goal was to increase our sales to 900 this year. The final count on cheese balls that we mixed, rolled and packaged was 1309!! With almost all expenses accounted for,



we will realize over \$5,000 profit this year. We use the profits to fund our Minnesota State - Fergus Fall Frances Haller and our Dollar for Scholars FFBPW scholarships. We have a wonderful dilemma this year, what to do with the additional money raised.

One of our members, Pastor Kate Bruns, is also a staff writer for an area magazine called "In Good Company". Pastor Kate asked co-presidents, Jenny and Linda, if we would be interested in interviewing for an article she would like to write featuring

FFBPW. Interviews are completed and we are anxiously awaiting the arrival of the winter issue of the magazine.

Our next big project will be the 2nd annual casino night. Food, drink and games are provided at no cost to our guests. Last year's event was a big success and we anticipate another fun night this year.

Monthly programs continue to be interesting and unique, such as the January program, "Does This Clutter Make My Butt Look Big?" We hope to learn how to de-clutter our lives in many ways. ■

GREATER GRAND RAPIDS BW

Susan Jordahl-Bubacz, co-presidents

Up here in the (not-so-white) great north our Grand Rapids local has been busy as ever. We've had some fantastic monthly meetings. Our October speaker was our very own vice president, Nikki Roberts who took us through keeping our bodies in balance...in many ways. A therapist and masseuse, she taught us what to look for, and then when and where to work on what we need physically and to keep us limber and help us remain pain free, keep our balance, and to remember to stretch those muscles as we age. We even broke out in a few tai chi moves, it was fun and very illuminating... (Lol, this old gray mare just ain't what she used to be.) Our November speaker was a very clever woman with mad skills in the kitchen. We learned tons about cooking, simple dishes and great ways to utilize those leftovers. She shared her books with us that were full of her innovative ideas in the kitchen. We all reminisced about recipes of our childhood, things we feed our families and the crazy traditional heritage foods that our grandparents, parents and even some of us still enjoy at the holidays today. This meeting left a little glow in your heart and made you want to get into your holiday kitchens!

Our other recent activities: Our annual craft show fund raiser at the Timberlake Lodge took place the first weekend in November. We just held our annual Holiday get-together at the Forest Lake Inn and Restaurant. We had an ornament exchange, fun door prizes and a lot of laughs were shared. The raffle/door prize was six plus dozen beautiful holiday cookies, 42 different kinds - from traditional to festive to just plain old way tasty! The desire to win a taste of those scrumptious little morsels brought in some nice funds for our future projects within our community. Yes, it was a festive and good evening spent with our sisters of the Greater Grand Rapids Business Women - the food was excellent, the camaraderie wonderful and holiday spirit abounded... All in all, a great way to end the year.

Here is our current agenda for the New Year: "Another fresh new year is here.... Another year to live! To banish worry, doubt and fear, To love and laugh and give!

This bright new year is given me to live each day with zest...To daily grow and try to be my highest and my best!

I have the opportunity once more to right some wrongs, To pray for peace, to plant a tree, and sing more joyful songs!"

So, from the Greater Grand Rapids Business Women to you and yours, "May a very blessed and exceptional New Year be on your calendar for 2012." ■

OWATONNA BW Theresa Anderson, 1st vice pres.

The Owatonna Business Women are busy preparing for our annual “Woman of Achievement” event, chaired by Executive Board Member, Ms. Karen Legult, which will be held in March 2012. At our Annual Woman of Achievement, we recognize nominations of several Steele County Professional Women Leaders with one of the nominees earning the distinction of being named the 2012 “Woman of Achievement”.

In addition, each year scholarships are awarded and presented to Steele County women who are moving forward with a post-secondary education either by graduating high school or continuing a non-traditional education.

And last but not least, we recognize a Steele County Woman over 60 years of age, whose leadership and perseverance has carved a significant footprint in the community, earning the distinction of “Pioneer Woman”.

The women of Owatonna continue with our proud tradition of “working women, working together”, providing recognition and scholarships to promote the personal and professional development of women. For more information regarding this event please contact us at OwatonnaBusinessWomen@hotmail.com! ■

WILLMAR BW Wendy Ulferts, president

We have had a very busy fall as a Willmar MBW group. We have been very fortunate to see many new members join our group over the past few months and are so happy to see our involvement and attendance at meetings growing.

We just started a new project with our local Women’s Shelter. We adopted a room! We will be in charge of decorating and keeping the room supplied. We are very excited about this opportunity to further impact our community positively.

Our mentoring group continues to be very active. Monthly our mentors have an “outing” with their mentees. Our mentor members are very committed to this program and we are working on ways to get our other members involved in our mentoring program even if they are not interested in being a formal mentor. Our programs this fall have been excellent.

In October, we had our annual fall banquet where we featured a local speaker and awarded our Women of the Year award to Kristine Duinick, a local auctioneer and business owner and our Employee of the Year award to our local Herberger’s store. Willmar MBW would like to wish you all a Happy New Year!! ■

MBW Winter Meeting — January 27-28, 2012
Registration Form Due By January 20, 2012

MAKE YOUR ROOM RESERVATIONS WITH: HILTON Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport Mall of America

3800 American Blvd E • Bloomington, MN 55425-1658 • PHONE: 952-854-2100

Room Block under: **“Minnesota Business Women”** • Single/Double — \$99 + tax

HOTEL DEADLINE: January 13, 2012

Name _____
 Address _____

 Work Phone _____
 Home Phone _____
 Fax _____
 Email _____
 Local Org. _____

REGISTRATION FEE:..... \$40.00 \$ _____

SATURDAY:

BREAKFAST on your own

LUNCH Asian Salad with Chicken -

roll & butter, coffee or tea \$26.00 \$ _____

LATE FEE (AFTER JANUARY 20, 2012)..... \$10.00 \$ _____

(PLEASE NOTE: Late registrations are not guaranteed availability of meals as count must be given early to the hotel.)

I CANNOT ATTEND, SEND PACKET ONLY \$10.00 \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Check # _____

Please check one or more of the following:
 Member . . . is this your 1st state meeting? _____
 State Officer: _____
 State Administrative Assistant (Year ____ / ____)
 State Parliamentarian
 Club President or _____ Club Representative
 State Committee Chair: _____
 Past State President (Year ____ / ____)
 Guest or Speaker _____

MAIL CHECKS PAYABLE TO: MBW-Meetings

Send to:

Faye Crane • PO Box 404 • Grand Rapids, MN 55912
218-326-6200

MINNESOTA BUSINESS WOMAN (ISSN: 0194-9950) is published quarterly for \$6 per year by the Minnesota Business Women, at PO Box 404, Grand Rapids, MN 55744. Periodicals postage paid at Grand Rapids, MN and additional offices.

POSTMASTER: SEND address changes to:
MINNESOTA BUSINESS WOMAN
PO Box 404, MN 55744

TO:

My Ireland Adventure

Patricia Kaiser, Mankato BPW

I have been given the gift of a lifetime in the form of an overseas work assignment. I am the controller of Southern Minnesota Construction which is owned by an Irish holding company – CRH plc. This is a publicly traded company with the world headquarters located in Dublin, Ireland. They have over 75,000 employees throughout the US, Europe, Asia, northern Africa, and South America.

First let me back up in my story..... I am an active member of the Mankato BPW club and have been for over ten years. I have developed some leadership skills through our local club and have used some of these skills in my work, community, and church. It has opened my eyes to all possibilities by hearing and seeing the diversity in our members.

In July of this year an email came through my work email from our world headquarters – CRH in Dublin, Ireland. The job posting was for a nine month accounting manager position in our world headquarters for a maternity leave – note to the US, Ireland offers a 26 week time off period for all new mothers! There was certainly no coincidence for on this same day we sold our house. Our plans were to downsize by selling our big house in the country near Mankato, pay off the mortgages and then rent a townhouse in town. To make a long story short, I have strong faith and things fell into place for this opportunity. Two and one half weeks later I was flown over to Dublin for a third interview –first two were via Skype. Two weeks after this trip we packed up our house, had the last party at our home in the country, and the next day I flew to Dublin. Total time from

the email to starting date – four weeks!

It has been a very positive experience for the first three months. I have had a full range of emotions all the way from excitement to humility. Excitement because of the opportunity to live in Europe and work at our world headquarters; humility because I am working at a job with totally different tasks and assignments and have experienced the learning curve. The only thing remaining the same is managing a team. I have been able to go exploring in this beautiful land of Ireland with its lush green fields, grazing sheep, and warm lovely people. I never get tired of just driving and looking at the green fields outlined with trees or bushes. It looks like a giant green quilt. The Irish people are so genuine and I have experienced such kindness when my car overheated, endless questions at work, getting lost (a lot) and given directions, and helping me out whenever needed. I have joined two Meet Up groups, found a church, joined a gym, and am working on researching my Irish ancestors – my great-grandfather. I have tried to find a women’s business connection but I think they may not have as many here as the states.

I started a blog to keep in contact with family and friends at home plus use Skype and email every day. These are my main sources of communication. I will be able to spend Thanksgiving at home in Minnesota and then will go back to Ireland for another six months. I have a deep faith and am excited about this adventure God has given me and how He will allow me to use this experience when I get home in the spring.



A good place to hike, south of Dublin



Pat enjoying the scenery



Kilkenny Castle – early November