



Rural Minnesota Journal 2012

Who Lives in Rural Minnesota:

A Region in Transition

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About the Authors

Robert Franklin, a Philadelphia native, is a retired journalist, community volunteer, and member of RMJ's editorial committee. As a reporter and editor, Bob worked for the *Minneapolis Tribune* and *Star Tribune* for nearly 40 years and for the Associated Press before that. He was city editor, state editor, and a reporter mostly covering philanthropy and Minnesota outside the metro area. He taught journalism for 24 years as an adjunct faculty member of the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul. In the early 1970s, Franklin was a Village Council member and chief of police for Medina, then a small town on the fringe of the Twin Cities. In retirement, he has taught as an inner-city volunteer for ThreeSixty Journalism, a high school program, and has been a judge for three years for national investigative reporting contests for the Society of Professional Journalists. He and his wife, Norma Jean, a farm girl from Wright County, have lived on Lake Independence since 1966.

Ben Winchester is currently a Research Fellow for the University of Minnesota Extension, Center for Community Vitality, where he concentrates his research efforts on two topics that are vital to rural Minnesota: documenting “newcomers” to identify the social and economic opportunities of this migration; and analyzing rural community leadership. Overall, he works on cultivating connections between institutions of higher



education and rural places by involving university faculty, staff, students, and programs in everyday community life. Before joining Extension, he worked at the Center for Small Towns at the University of Minnesota, Morris.



Mary Quirk is the Executive Director for the Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA). She manages MAVA's statewide initiatives to increase training and resources for leaders of volunteers. In this position Mary led the development of a system for delivering best practices information that has reached over 1,000 leaders of volunteers across Minnesota. She also manages MAVA's initiatives on engaging Boomers as volunteers, volunteerism in a shifting environment and volunteerism in immigrant communities. Mary's interest in rural volunteerism goes back to volunteering growing up in Nebraska. She has a master's degree from the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and a master's degree from the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota.

Katie Bull is the Membership, Communications, and Services Manager for the Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA). Katie has been on MAVA staff since 2008. She is responsible for managing a MAVA membership of 800+, arranging workshops, and handling MAVA communications. Katie has expanded MAVA's AmeriCorps*VISTA program and has been to all corners of the state to present trainings on MAVA initiatives. Previously she was a VISTA member at CommonBond Communities and a VISTA Leader at the Minnesota Literacy Council. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota in English. She has volunteered as an English teacher in the U.S. and Africa and received her Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language from Hamline University.



Elizabeth Ellis has successfully developed and managed volunteer programs in both the private and nonprofit sector, including the Girl Scouts, Minnesota Department of Corrections, Face to Face Health and Counseling Services, and the YWCA of St. Paul. Elizabeth is a national trainer, author, creator of www.volunteerservus.com, and founding member and instructor for the Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA) Volunteer Resources Leadership (VRL) series. At the 2011 Minnesota Conference on Volunteer Administration, Elizabeth co-authored and presented Rural Volunteerism with Heather Thormodson addressing cultivating community in rural areas and planting seeds for a sustainable future. She holds a B.A. in Nonprofit Administration & Resource Development, an MMBA in Nonprofit Organization from St. Thomas University, and is a proud recipient of the Mary Wiser Award in recognition for Excellence in Volunteer Administration.



Heather Thormodson has her M.S. in Experiential Education from Minnesota State University Mankato and over 17 years of experience in the volunteer management field. Heather works at West Central Minnesota Communities Action Inc., where she serves as the RSVP Director. She has developed and delivered training sessions to volunteers and staff in previous jobs surrounding a variety of topics: orientation to volunteerism, sensitivity training, and workplace safety to name a few. Currently she also serves as a Volunteer Resources trainer for the Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration in which she has covered topics such as: recruitment, retention, supervision, recognition, managing risk, and motivation/interviews of the volunteer management field. Heather has a passion for being a strong advocate for reducing the effects of poverty in rural west central Minnesota and takes pride in her country roots.



Valerie Shangreaux has been the Director of the Blandin Community Leadership Programs for the Blandin Foundation since 2007. Previously she worked as a Grants Manager and the Campus Coordinator for the Oklahoma Alliance for Minority Participation in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Program at Oklahoma State University. Valerie

was also faculty in the Department of Family Relations and Child Development at Oklahoma State University. She has been a consultant providing leadership training, intercultural competency training, and strategic planning assistance to communities and organizations throughout the United States. Dr. Shangreaux holds a Ph.D. from Oklahoma State University in Educational Psychology. Her master's degree, also in Educational Psychology, and her Bachelor's degree in Home Economics are from the University of Nebraska. Valerie is Oglala Lakota and originally from Pine Ridge, South Dakota.

Malissa Bahr has been on staff with the Blandin Foundation's leadership programs since 1999, and currently she is responsible for their development, design, and implementation. Malissa also manages and coordinates activities of internal and external program consultants and has been a leadership trainer since 2003. Prior to working with the Blandin Foundation,



Malissa spent seven years in the field of law, specializing in class action litigation. She holds a master's degree in organizational/industrial psychology, where she focused her studies on effective small groups and leadership development. She is currently working on her dissertation to complete her Ph.D. in educational psychology with emphasis on adult learning and program assessment. Malissa is originally from Eveleth, Minnesota.

Joyce Hoelting is the assistant director for the Extension Center for Community Vitality, managing communications and administrative staff for the Center. She has written and published articles about the Center's work in *New Directions for Higher Education*, *Community Dividend* (a publication of the Federal Reserve Bank in Minneapolis) and other publications.



She is co-editor of *Vital Connections*, the Extension Center for Community Vitality newsletter for Minnesota communities. Joyce is a member of the board of directors of the Community Development Society and is the editor of *CD Practice*, the Community Development Society's on-line journal, which publishes articles about successful practices in the field of community development. Joyce holds a Master's of Public Affairs from the U of M's Humphrey Institute and received a bachelor's in English and speech communications in her home state of Nebraska.



Mary Ann Gwost Hennen is the program leader for Leadership and Civic Engagement programs at the University of Minnesota Extension, supporting regional educators as they develop, design, deliver, and evaluate leadership and civic engagement programming across the state. Mary Ann joined Extension in January of 2005 after leading, for six years, Community Leadership Initiatives for the Wilder Center for Communities, managing leadership development programs for the St. Paul neighborhood. In the '90's, she was an Extension Leadership Development State Specialist, co-creating leadership education programs around the state. Mary Ann has a master's degree in educational psychology and social foundations from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and a bachelor's in personnel services from Moorhead State University.



Peter Caldwell currently works as a child protection social worker in New Zealand. In 2010 and 2011, he was a graduate research assistant for the Extension Center for Community Vitality, evaluating Leadership and Civic Engagement programs. While in Minnesota, Peter also worked for the Hmong American Partnership and Neighborhood House.

He received his master's in social work at the University of Minnesota.

Susan Stehling is a Communications Associate at the Minnesota Council on Foundations (MCF), a regional association that works actively to expand and strengthen a vibrant community of diverse grantmakers who individually and collectively advance the common good. At MCF, she edits *Giving Forum*, a quarterly print publication that keeps staff of nonprofits current on what's new with philanthropy in Minnesota. In addition, she does other writing and editing and handles media relations. Prior to joining MCF, Stehling was a long-time employee at Park Nicollet Health Services, where she handled internal communications and led the organization's intranet development team. Previously, she managed and marketed fundraising special events for the American Lung Association of Hennepin County. She has her bachelor of business administration from the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire. Stehling is an active volunteer in several community organizations.



Wendy C. Wehr is Vice President of Communications and Information Services at the Minnesota Council on Foundations (MCF). At MCF she leads a team of communications and research professionals who focus on gathering and disseminating information that increases individual and organizational philanthropy throughout the state. Prior to

joining MCF, Wehr served as Development Director of the Minnesota Literacy Council, and as an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of St. Thomas. In the for-profit sector, Wehr was Senior Vice President, Group Manager, at Colle & McVoy Marketing Communications, where she led a multi-disciplinary account team that deployed research, advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing and interactive communications to build client brands and exceed business objectives. Wehr also has prior experience as a corporate advertising manager, public relations writer and agriculture trade industry journalist. Wehr earned a master's degree in leadership from Augsburg College and a bachelor's degree in communications studies from Pennsylvania State University.



LaRhae Grindal Knatterud is Director of Aging Transformation for the Continuing Care Administration at the Minnesota Department of Human Services, where she has worked for the past 15 years. She has a B.A. from Augsburg College in Minneapolis and an M.A.P.A. from the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, with major concentrations in gerontology and health care policy. She began her career at the Area Agency on Aging for the Twin Cities, and her responsibilities have included leading Project 2030 and Transform 2010, efforts to identify the impacts over the next 30 years of Minnesota's aging population; chief staff to the state's long-term care task force; and coordinator of Minnesota's efforts on long-term care financing reform. Currently, she is staff leader for a federal/state effort, Own Your Future, a project encouraging and enabling Minnesotans to create a plan for their long-term care.

Kyle Uphoff is the Regional Analysis and Outreach Manager at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). He is responsible for the collection and dissemination of labor market expertise through DEED's four

Regional Labor Market Analysts located throughout the state. Kyle has bachelor's degrees in biochemistry and genetics from the University of Minnesota. After completing graduate work in chemistry at Indiana University, he received a master's degree in public policy from the Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota. Kyle has worked with DEED since 2000 and previously worked with other state agencies, including the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources and the Minnesota Department of Education.



Joan Jarvis Ellison traded big city life for the country and began a lifetime of adventures in animal husbandry, small scale farming, and fiber artistry. Her first book, *Shepherdess: Notes from the Field*, a book on “how not to raise sheep,” won a Minnesota Book Award in 1996. Her second book, *The Faces of Change*, on the transformation of Pelican Rapids, was published in 2007. Ellison writes creative nonfiction, essays, fiction and poetry. She has taught writing to elementary age students, high school students, and adults. Ellison holds a B.A. in chemistry from Macalester College and an M.S. in biophysical sciences from the University of Houston. She has spent most of her adult life working as a mother, shepherdess, and finally, freelance writer.