

# NOTES FROM THE TRAIL

A Publication of the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation



FALL/WINTER 2022

# NOTES FROM THE TRAIL

**Fall/Winter 2022**

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**Our Board of Directors:**

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**Theodore Roosevelt**  
MEDORA FOUNDATION

*Medora*  
EXPLORE IT. ADORE IT.

*Medora Musical*

*BullyPulpit*  
GOLF COURSE

**6 Summer of 2022 by the Numbers**

**7 We Built This City: Celebrating our Volunteers**

**10 Endowments In Action In Medora**

**12 How Philanthropy Built the Burning Hills Amphitheatre**

**17 Introducing the Medora Legacy Society**

**20 Become a Rough Rider!**

**4 From the Desk of Randy Hatzenbuler**

**9 What's Happening in Medora**

**16 Under Harold's Hat**



# FROM THE DESK OF RANDY HATZENBUHLER

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Above: Medora's Bill Sorensen and the Engelstad Foundation's Jeff Cooper with a guest who told us the new Access Medora elevator at the Burning Hills Amphitheatre allowed him to see the Medora Musical again.

Next page: The new Access Medora elevator, made possible by the Engelstad Foundation & the State of North Dakota.

## Mom and dad taught us:

Be nice. Be kind. Say "Please." Pick up the trash. Be friendly. Look someone in the eye when you are talking to them and use their name. Give a firm handshake. Say "Thank you."

...Turns out, **our parents taught us almost everything we need to work in Medora!**

As we head into the holiday season, I want to share a few of the things we are grateful for in Medora:

- **Our guests.** You are amazingly loyal and are the best advertisers of Medora. Each year, customer surveys tell us that 93 to 97% of the people who attend the Medora Musical say they recommend it to family and friends and that they plan to return.
- **Our employees.** They come from North Dakota and across the USA and the world. They are a group of ordinary people who become a team that gives extraordinary service and effort.
- **Our volunteers** – over 600 of them! They served guests, planted flowers, refurbished the Medora Children's Park, and completed countless other projects. One of the unseen and most valuable things they do is become friends and mentors to so many of our employees. Medora would not be the same without our volunteers.
- **Our generous donors.** Every gift – from a \$50 Junior Rough Rider Membership to a \$2 million gift – helps us fulfill our vision to connect people to historic Medora for positive, life-changing experiences. Medora is one of North Dakota's great examples of what philanthropy can do.
- **Our Board of Directors.** Progress in Medora is not accidental. Our board works diligently on developing our strategic plans. Those plans called for more family activity, which resulted in the recent Point to Point Park and hiking trails. Current priorities are to complete the refurbishment of Bully Pulpit Golf Course and construction of Wild Horse Place, a critically needed apartment building for Medora.



What will be next? The board is studying the feasibility of two future projects. A new **Western Heritage Park** would include new rodeo grounds and grandstand, equine center, practice arena, approximately 200 covered horse stalls, and 80 large rig spots with full hookups for horse and rodeo enthusiasts. This project would be active area which would not only include events but would also serve to educate and celebrate the western way of life.

Also being studied is an **event barn** and a limited number of **guest cabins** that would be located near Bully Pulpit Golf Course. It could become the hub for corporate outings, family reunions, weddings, or golfers.

We are grateful for so many things in 2022. But, there is no hiding that we are already eager for 2023!

Thank you for helping make Medora better. We send you our best wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving and Christmas.



*Randy*  
Randy Hatzenbuehler  
President & CEO

# Thank you for an amazing summer!

**114,701**

*Medora Musical  
attendees*



**15,730**

*rounds of golf at  
Bully Pulpit*



**43,667**

*meals at the  
Pitchfork Steak Fondue*



**35,226**

*nights at our  
lodging facilities*



**Scan this code to re-live the summer of 2022 by the numbers!**

# TRMF VOLUNTEERS WE BUILT THIS CITY!

On every block of every street in Medora, North Dakota, you'll find evidence of passion, purpose, and hard work on the part of TRMF's amazing volunteers.

Few know this as well as Dick Grosz, who has made the annual trip from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to volunteer in Medora with his wife Dee since 2005.

"It's good for a person!" Dick said. "We can go back to Medora now and see what we've done – and remember the people we worked with to get it done. That's special."

Dick's elbow grease can be found all over Medora: from the wooden boardwalk outside the Rough Riders Hotel to the wood stain on the Schafer family cabin. But the impact of volunteerism in Medora goes far beyond manual labor.

Our 600+ annual volunteers built the community of Medora on the strength of their fellowship. "It's like coming for a family reunion, really! We greet each other just like family," said Viola Wysocki, a volunteer from Grand Forks.

And in some cases, they literally built a city! In 2001, a group of volunteers constructed the Medora Children's Park in less than five days. And earlier this year, another team of volunteers refreshed the park.

Charles Cullen was there both times. "It's been well used over the years," he said. "If the Lord should tarry, it will be here for another twenty-one years!"

From major projects to smaller, often unseen duties, our volunteers carry the spirit of work that would make Teddy Roosevelt and Harold Schafer grin. **We can't thank them enough for another amazing year in Medora.**



Above:  
A group of in-season  
volunteers during the  
summer of 2022.



Scan this code to see  
our video celebration  
of the 2022 TRMF  
Volunteers!

# ***Black Friday Weekend Deals!***

Friday, Nov 25 12:00 AM - Monday, Nov 28 11:59 PM



***Buy one, get one free!***



***Buy one, get one free!***



***Get the best deals of the year on these and more! Scan the code  
or visit [Medora.com/BlackFriday](https://www.Medora.com/BlackFriday) for full details and deals.***



# MORE TO EXPLORE IN MEDORA!



Nov 25 - 28: Black Friday  
Weekend Deals



Dec 2: Medora's Old Fashioned  
Cowboy Christmas



Theodore's Dining Room  
Open All Year



Spring Entertainment  
Lineup To Be Announced!



Dec 1 - 18: A Very  
Merry Badlands Christmas



Dec 10: Bold St. Nick's  
Fatbike & Snowshoe Race



Feb 9: Giving Hearts Day  
to Support Veterans in Medora



Get exclusive  
Medora Christmas  
merch at  
[ShopMedora.com!](http://ShopMedora.com!)

Dates subject to change. Visit [Medora.com/Calendar](http://Medora.com/Calendar) for a full list of what's happening in town.

# ENDOWMENTS IN ACTION

Since TRMF's founding in 1986, thousands upon thousands of generous people have stepped up to further our mission. And as we look decades down the road, we are committed to a strategy of growing **endowments**. It's a three-step process:

1. **A generous donor makes a gift** of at least \$25,000 to establish an endowment.
2. **The endowment grows** and produces income annually through prudent management by our investment staff.
3. **The income proceeds support TRMF** as designated by donor intentions, with a spending policy of 4 percent annually.

Endowments are a great way to ensure your family name and passion for Medora live on forever! Plus, endowment gifts are eligible for the North Dakota 40% tax credit. On this page, you'll learn about **two of our newest endowment funds**.



## MEDORA *Gospel Brunch* ENDOWMENT

*Created and initially funded by Reuben & Clarice Liechty*

In 2016, the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation introduced audiences to a brand-new experience: the Medora Gospel Brunch.

The concept has become a staple of the Medora experience for thousands of guests. Since 2019, nearly 25,000 people

have enjoyed the show. This new endowment will allow us to continue providing this one-of-a-kind experience for generations to come.



*Scan this code to learn more about the  
Medora Gospel Brunch Endowment!*

*To learn about TRMF's endowments, or to discuss contributing to or establishing an endowment, contact us at [info@trmf.org](mailto:info@trmf.org).*

# THE TEDDY ROOSEVELT SHOW

## Endowment

*Created and initially funded by  
Laura & Bob Spolum*



Every summer since 2012, world-renowned Theodore Roosevelt reprisor Joe Wiegand has brought TR to life at Medora's Old Town Hall Theater. Joe also hosts the Badlands Chautauqua, where new and younger Theodore Roosevelt reprisors are trained and encouraged to portray TR with the Little Missouri River in their veins.

This new endowment was created to ensure the spirit of TR – and the unique blend of history, education, and entertainment created by the TR Show – stand the test of time.



*Scan this code to learn more about the  
Teddy Roosevelt Show Endowment!*

...ing one of your own, contact our Development Team at 701-223-4800.



## **Bully to our friends at the North Dakota Petroleum Foundation!**

Our ongoing effort to innovate and preserve the Bully Pulpit Golf Course experience received a major boost in 2022. We are grateful to the North Dakota Petroleum Foundation for their significant gift to Legacy Bully Pulpit!

*"We're proud to be long-time supporters of TRMF and Medora. Thousands of oil and gas employees and their families love to experience the beauty of Medora and the Badlands, and we're glad we can be a part of that legacy for them and TRMF."*

— Ron Ness  
CEO, North Dakota Petroleum Foundation  
President, North Dakota Petroleum Council



**NORTH DAKOTA  
PETROLEUM  
FOUNDATION**





# GENEROSITY BY DESIGN

## How Philanthropy Built the Burning Hills Amphitheatre

In the early 1990s, one of the world's greatest designers of television stages and sets received a phone call out of the blue from Harold Schafer.

"Harold said, 'We're trying to see how we can upgrade our outdoor amphitheatre in Medora. Would that be something you could help us with?'"

The man on the other end of the phone was René Lagler, whose résumé as a production designer was as long as it was impressive. His fingerprints were all over some of the biggest stages in the world, including the 57th Academy Awards, several Grammy Awards, the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the 1984 Olympics, and Hollywood Squares.

René agreed to Schafer's offer to visit Medora and survey the amphitheatre – which was in serious need of an upgrade.

"The amphitheatre was what you might call crude," said Jim Kack, who was one of the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation's first board members. "It needed help."

Harold Schafer established TRMF in 1986. The \$4.2 million campaign to redesign and reconstruct the Burning Hills Amphitheatre was the first major initiative of the fledgling non-profit – and the first major test of the public's appetite for philanthropy toward Medora.

"Harold was very concerned about whether people would have interest in Medora the way he did," Kack said.

It was by serendipity that René Lagler became connected to North Dakota. One of the designer's friends, Steve Ehlers, had been hired to design an electronic shooting gallery for Medora. (You can still find it next door to the Old Town Hall Theatre!)



*Above: Reconstruction of the Burning Hills Amphitheatre underway between 1991 and 1992.*

*Previous page: A conceptual drawing by René Lagler of his vision for the Burning Hills Amphitheatre.*

René accompanied his friend Steve to drive the shooting gallery from Hollywood to Medora. "It took 36 hours," René recalled.

But the descent out of the quiet, rolling plains and into the Badlands made an impression on him. "The first time I saw those mountains was really amazing," he said.

It was many months later that Harold called René and asked him to return to Medora to survey the worn-down amphitheatre. "I flew into Bismarck and got off the plane, and saw a gentleman with a cane. And he said, 'Can I carry your bag?' I said, 'Oh gosh, no!' Then he introduced himself as Harold Schafer," René said, laughing about the encounter.

Harold and René drove back out to Medora to see the amphitheatre up close – its dirt paths, its wooden benches, and its simple stage – and to imagine a brighter future.

"He stood at the top of the hill and said, 'I can see it,'" board member Jim Kack said. But the foundation's leadership worried about the financial toll of accepting a concept from the Emmy Award-winning designer.

Those worries, as it turned out, were not necessary.

"René said, 'I'll do it for free,'" Kack recalled with teary eyes. "He designed the whole thing at no charge."

## How Philanthropy Built the Burning Hills Amphitheatre

continued

So René got to work – and outlined a set of ingenious ideas that to this day define the Burning Hills Amphitheatre.

"I ended up designing a pathway so people could walk down into the theatre," he said. "And then, of course, the escalator."

Even the stage lights were René's idea. "The spotlight towers were made to look like old water towers from the outside, rather than just putting up scaffolding."

But perhaps his most brilliant idea was for the stage itself. "I came up with the idea of having the set be built on railroad tracks so that it could open and close. A little western town that could split open to allow horses to ride up the hill and onto the stage in the Battle of San Juan Hill."

By gifting his innovative design to TRMF, the foundation had the financial freedom to move forward with construction – and to this day, audiences enjoy the one-of-a-kind western flair with which every element of the Burning Hills Amphitheatre is imbued.

"For me, it was a pleasure to do. Money was not even a consideration. It was a great design challenge, and I really am happy with how it all turned out," René said.

*Designer René Lagler, then-TRMF President Rod Tjaden, and architect Don Barsness in the new amphitheatre in 1992.*

Ultimately, thousands of contributors helped make the reconstruction of the amphitheatre a reality in the 1990s, including a \$100,000 gift from the Melroe Company, led by Bob Spolum.

"That public show of support was a great boost to Harold's hopes for the foundation," Kack said. "He realized that it might just work after all." 🐾



# Under Harold's Hat

Stories, ideas, and values from our founder, Harold Schafer

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Harold Schafer's acumen for business was no secret in his lifetime. But what few people knew during his lifetime was the depth of his generosity – because much of his philanthropy was done anonymously.

Kermit Lidstrom, the former President of Bismarck State College, shared this story of a woman in need in the documentary film *Mr. Bubble: The Harold Schafer Story*:

"She said, 'I was married to a rotten man. He drank and ran around – and got into a motorcycle accident and died. He had let his life insurance lapse. The banker was here talking to me about foreclosing on the house. The grocery man was saying "I can't give you much more credit." And I didn't have any way of getting a job. I had no skills and two young children.'

"She said, 'I was thinking about suicide.'"

"Then suddenly, the bank president showed up and said, "Your bank note has been cleared – and here's a checking account with \$1,000 in it for you."

"She said, 'How did this happen?' And he said, 'I can't tell you.'"

"Later she found out bank president was in the hospital dying, and she went to see him. She asked: 'Who was my benefactor?' He said, 'Harold Schafer.'"

**"And she said: 'Who's that?'"**

It's no wonder that Sheila Schafer used to say: "I was married to Santa Claus!"

# Introducing The Medora Legacy Society

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## Security For Your Family and Ours

The Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation was established in 1986 by Harold and Sheila Schafer: a family who saw something bigger than themselves in this unique little town. Thanks to their vision, millions of families have discovered Medora—and thousands among them have created traditions that we believe will last for generations.

The future of Medora depends on the continued support of special people who, like the Schafers before them, recognize the potential that this town holds for history, education, and entertainment.

**The Medora Legacy Society is made up of people who have chosen to give a legacy gift to the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation. Designating TRMF as the beneficiary in your estate via bequest of cash or stock, designated beneficiary of a donor advised fund, or in a charitable remainder trust are significant and tax effective ways to make a profound impact on Medora.**



## "It's So Important To Me!"

Jackie Banas grew up on a farm near Jamestown — but every summer, Medora was "her spot."

"We would sit for hours, watching the prairie dogs scamper around and eating baloney sandwiches," she recalled. "We were just captivated by what we could find in the Badlands."

Today, Jackie is a TRMF volunteer of six years, a Rough Rider member, and a member of the Medora Legacy Society.

**"TRMF is in my estate plans because of the impact Medora has made on me. I want to give back to the place I love."**

Jackie said the decision to plan a gift to TRMF was also a gift to her loved ones. "It's a comfort to know my affairs are in order, and to know my kids won't have to experience the trauma of loose ends," she said.

"I hope others will consider a legacy gift to Medora too!"

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Contact the TRMF Development Team at 701.223.4800 to discuss joining the Medora Legacy Society.



# *A Very Merry* **BADLANDS** **CHRISTMAS**

**December 1 – December 18**

Thurs – Sat 7:30pm

Sat & Sun 2:00pm

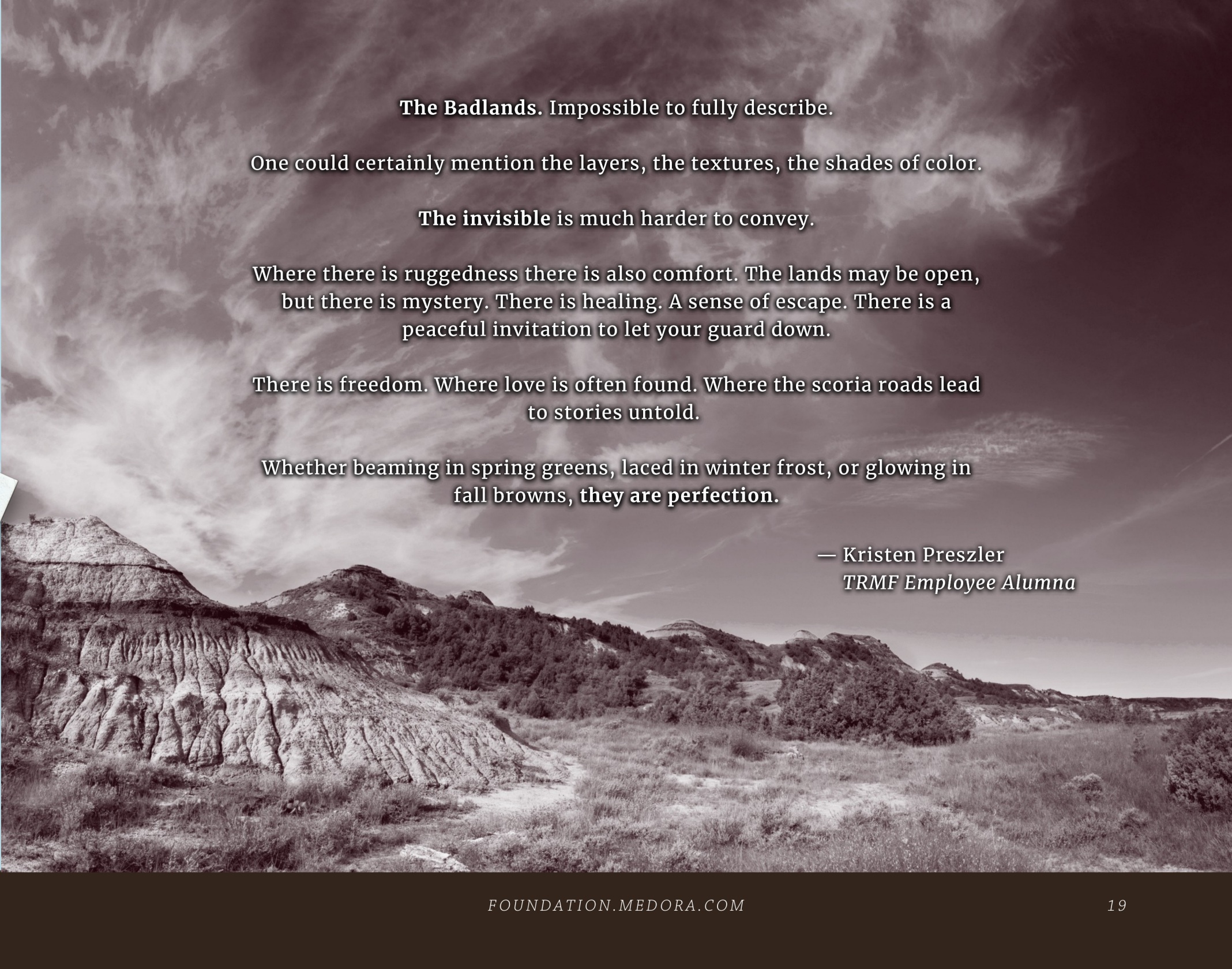
A Very Merry Badlands Christmas is bringing the holidays right to Medora! Celebrate this holiday season with wonderful music, comedy, and inspiring Christmas cheer.

This holiday favorite is wonderful for the entire family! Medora Musical stars of the past and present will bring you some of the season's very best music in the charming Old Town Hall Theater with a wonderful story and a dazzling finale that will remind us all of the reason for the season.



**Scan this code to reserve your seats!**





**The Badlands.** Impossible to fully describe.

One could certainly mention the layers, the textures, the shades of color.

**The invisible** is much harder to convey.

Where there is ruggedness there is also comfort. The lands may be open,  
but there is mystery. There is healing. A sense of escape. There is a  
peaceful invitation to let your guard down.

There is freedom. Where love is often found. Where the scoria roads lead  
to stories untold.

Whether beaming in spring greens, laced in winter frost, or glowing in  
fall browns, **they are perfection.**

— Kristen Preszler  
*TRMF Employee Alumna*

# STRENGTH IN NUMBERS!

*Each year, hundreds of kind folks join the ranks of our Rough Riders. Your support helps us achieve our mission — and allows you to choose one of three great perks.*



*Two season passes to  
the Medora Musical*



*Two rounds of golf at  
Bully Pulpit Golf Course*



*A \$150 gift card to all  
TRMF venues*

*or*



*Make a full charitable  
contribution*

**To join, tear off the form on the next page and mail it to:**

Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation  
P.O. Box 1696  
Bismarck, ND 58502

**Or scan this code to join online!**





# BECOME A ROUGH RIDER

**Enclose payment of \$333 and check the box on the right of the membership benefit you'd like to receive.**

All memberships received by May 1 will be printed in the 2023 *Medora Musical* Program and receive invites to exclusive, member-only events.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

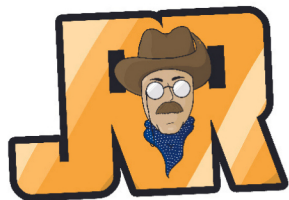
Method of Payment: ☐ Check ☐ Credit Card

Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Verification Code \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) to be listed in the *Medora Musical* Program \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **Make Medora memories forever. By checking this box you agree that your card will be charged \$333 each year.** \*Card will be charged each year on the day we process your payment until you ask us to stop. Recurring membership donation not available for check or cash payments.



## ENLIST A JUNIOR ROUGH RIDER

Membership as a Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation Junior Rough Rider is for kids 17 & under. All Junior Rough Riders get a special welcome packet and will be listed in the 2023 *Medora Musical* Program. We want to make this gift special for your Junior Rough Rider, so please write in their mailing address below. **Add more kids and/or grandkids' names on the back!**



I want to add \_\_\_\_\_ Junior Rough Rider Membership(s) at \$50 per membership

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Month/Day/Year

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail membership form and payment to: TRMF - P.O. Box 1696 - Bismarck, ND 58502 - 701.223.4800**

The Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation is a 501 ©(3) non-profit foundation. All gifts to TRMF are tax deductible to the extent allowed by the law. Always check with a tax professional before engaging in any transaction.

### Full Donation

Donation with full \$333 charitable deduction. No extra benefits included.

☐

*Medora*  
SHOPPING SPREE

A \$150 gift card useable at all TRMF stores/venues.

\$183 charitable deduction

☐

*Bully Pulpit*  
GOLF COURSE

Two rounds of golf.

\$133 charitable deduction

☐

*Medora Musical*

Two season passes under the names of...

\_\_\_\_\_

&

\_\_\_\_\_

\$133 charitable deduction

☐



# ENLIST A JUNIOR ROUGH RIDER

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday     /     /     Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Month/Day/Year  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

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Month/Day/Year  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_



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# TRMF BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP

***A wonderful way to support your colleagues, your customers, and Medora!***

\$1,000	2 transferable season passes to Medora Musical + Four rounds at Bully Pulpit (\$400 charitable deduction)
\$2,000	4 transferable season passes to Medora Musical + Four rounds at Bully Pulpit (\$1,100 charitable deduction)
\$4,000	8 transferable season passes to Medora Musical + Four rounds at Bully Pulpit (\$2,500 charitable deduction)
\$1,000	Choose to accept none of the options above and receive the full \$1,000 charitable deduction.

Transferrable season passes to the Medora Musical mean you, your teammates, and even your customers can enjoy the Greatest Show in the West to your heart's content!

Don't take it from us — here's what one of our valued Business Members has to say. (Their Medora Musical season passes were used 479 times in 2022!)

*"Plains Ag is thankful for our partnership with Medora! Not only are we able to support the Medora Musical, our employees and customers have the privilege of learning about the great history of Medora as well as an opportunity to see the beauty of the area."*

—DeeAnn Grunstad

**PLAINS AG**

FOR THOSE WHO DEMAND MORE



**Visit [Foundation.Medora.com/Member](https://Foundation.Medora.com/Member) to join or renew as a Business Member, or scan the QR code!**



*Theodore Roosevelt*  
MEDORA FOUNDATION

*Medora*  
EXPLORE IT. ADORE IT.

*Medora Musical*

*Bully Pulpit*  
GOLF COURSE

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