



(This is the third and final in a series of three columns written by Minneota High School students in Aaron Cheadle's class. It's part of the Bill Holm Essay's, written in his honor).

By Megan Spanton

All my life I've lived in Minneota.

It's very small, usually quiet and very ordinary.

Some people complain that it's too small and there's hardly anything to do in Minneota.

Compared to how it used to be 45 years ago, they'd be correct.

When my parents were growing up there were two cafe's — now both are closed.

The Dairy Lunch was a popular place as well, but it's closed, too!

The Joy Theatre was around when my dad was younger, but now it's a funeral parlor. The bowling alley was open almost all of the time, but now it's rarely open.

True, Minneota is small and has lost some of it's attractions, but has not lost its character — and in my opinion, it's an awesome place to live.

There are many advantages when growing up in a small town like Minneota.

When you meet someone walking down the street, you usually know them and have a quick conversation.

In a large city, like Minneapolis, you don't even make eye contact and you have to be aware of your surroundings.

There has never been a time in my life when I felt I was in danger living in Minneota.

Another advantage of living in a small town is attending a small town school.

Everyone knows everyone, maybe not on a close personal level, but they know you.

In a large school, you probably won't know half the kids in your graduating class, let alone all the others.

My cousin Beth Muchlinski Reisbig graduated from Marshall High in 1989. She knew about half her class members and less than half the kids in the school.

When I attended St. Edwards I could name ALL the kids in the school and now I can do the same at Minneota High School.

The teachers have a more personal relationship with their students in a smaller school and class sizes are smaller.

Sporting events, drama productions and the like are more meaningful because you actually know the participants.

Two of my cousins attend Eastview High School in Apple Valley, MN, which is a AAA school

with 2,000 students in grades 9-12.

They told me going to sporting events are fun, but they don't appreciate them like we do because they don't know the participants.

Here's another advantage to live in Minneota: we have a supportive community.

When my mother was still doing day care, if the wather permitted, we went on walks almost every day.

I remember someone would meet us and they'd jokingly ask mom if all of the kids were hers. When mom identified each of the kids with their parents, the person would recognize the names immediately.

Today, if I don't know someone, they typically know who I am, just by how I resemble my parents.

For example, when I started working at Finnegan's Store a year and a half ago, some of the shoppers didn't know my first nambe, but they knew my face or voice.

About 75 percent of those people told me I must by Lois bot's daughter and the other 25 percent said I was Doug Spanton's daughter.

Stan Miller told me, if he was blindfolded, he could have swarm it was my mom talking, rather than me.

Only in a small town.

Working at Finnegan's has helped me realize just how close this community has become.

It's given me an opportunity to get to know more people and I enjoy watching them converse at Finnegan's.

It really shows that Minnesota is a "tight-knit" community.

True, I could work at a bigger store like Hy-Vee in Marshall and make more money. But, I'd miss all the interesting characters that pop in and all of the friendships I've made.

By working in a small town grocery store, I've made some friendships I'm thank for.

When I work Thursday evenings, at 7 p.m. I can always county on seeing Ray and Bertha Bottelberghe.

They come in with big grins and they something like, "Hello there, Megan! How are you on this fine evening?"

Ray hands you four lattery tickets to validate; one Powerball, one Gopher 5 and two Hot Lottos.

After I'm done scanning all of the groceries, Bertha writes a check for \$10 more than the total and she likes to have a five, four ones and four quarters for change.

Then they leave and tell me, "Now don't work too hard!"

Finally, in a small community like Minneota — if you or your family has a tragedy, the community supports you.

for instance, when Emily Ufkin was tragically killed in a car accident, practically the entire town attended the funeral and the Ufkins were in everyone's thoughts and prayers.

The town reacted in the same when when we lost Bill Holm, Paul Larson, Jory Magnuson and Riley Sorenson.

It's amazing to see all the people come together and show their support.

I think that's what I love most about Minneota — it's "tight-knitness."

I'm glad and grateful to live in a small, usually quiet and very ordinary town like Minneota.