

November 2021

Horizons

A Golden West Customer Newsletter

Blending the Arts

Bridgewater Musician &
Makeup Artist Illustrates
Children's Book Series

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Blending the Arts

Bridgewater Musician & Makeup Artist Illustrates Children's Book Series

Rebecca Swift has pursued many interests over the years. The Bridgewater resident is a makeup artist, musician, social media director, illustrator, and mother of three. She may not be a household name, but anyone who has ever picked up a *Porter the Hoarder* book is familiar with her work.

Rebecca's drawings bring the spunky little girl at the heart of Sean Covell's popular children's book series to life. And she owes it all to her own little girl, Logan.

Bridgewater Offers Sense of Community

Bridgewater is an unlikely base of operations for a woman whose business partner is a well-known Hollywood producer, but it suits Rebecca perfectly fine. The Yankton native is a single mother of three: daughters Logan (17) and Quinn (14), and son Thomas (3). She moved the family to Bridgewater several years ago because its location midway between Mitchell and Sioux Falls provided her with more makeup job opportunities. Along the way, she discovered other advantages to living in a rural setting.



Rebecca's artistic background made illustrating children's books a snap.



"Water was coming up in my basement, and I felt helpless," she says. "But then, all these people just showed up and rallied with their mops and buckets, and they saved me. I really feel like community is a special thing that not a lot of people in 2021 get to experience."

Music, Makeup, & Movies

While Rebecca's main projects today involve makeup and illustration, she is most passionate about music.

"I actually pursued music first," she says. "It's something I got into about 10 years ago, but it got pushed so far beneath everything else."

“My favorite part about this town is the quiet – and the people. It’s really shown me this sense of community at a time where I was in over my head.”

Rebecca Swift

Her musical talent landed her onstage with some of the biggest names in the record business. Rebecca auditioned for *American Idol* in season 11 and made it through several rounds, all the way to Hollywood week, where she “forgot all the lyrics and was sent home by default.” The experience gave her pause and she put a planned album on hold.

Instead, she went to makeup artistry school, where she was talented enough to land gigs as a movie makeup artist. That opened her eyes to additional possibilities.

“I was inspired to do theatrical makeup after I did a movie in New Orleans,” she recalls. “It was my first time dealing with bullet wounds, that kind of thing. I was like wow; this is way more fun than beauty makeup!”

So much fun that she was soon using makeup to transform herself into celebrities and other famous faces – everybody from Captain Jack Sparrow to Sophia Vergara.

Logan the Hoarder

Sean Covell, a producer of *Napoleon Dynamite*, met Rebecca while both were auditioning for an acting role in Hill City. The two became fast friends and developed a professional working relationship. The seeds for their collaboration on *Porter the Hoarder* were planted when Rebecca's daughter, Logan, was three years old.

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Edgemont Roots Keep Storyteller Grounded

Edgemont isn't exactly fertile breeding ground for Hollywood producers, but it was home to Sean Covell, who's also Rebecca's publishing partner, for the first 18 years of his life.

Best known as a producer of the critically acclaimed, cult-classic film *Napoleon Dynamite*, Covell didn't excel in sports like many of his peers, so he focused instead on what he was good at: drama and stand-up comedy. After high school, he studied Broadcast Management at the University of Nebraska, Kearney, then made his way to California. He found success in filmmaking, but missed South Dakota.

“Here's the thing about Edgemont,” he says. “I fought for 18 years to get out of that small town ... and I've fought every day since to get back in. What I didn't realize then was the power of community.”

Much to his surprise, Sean didn't find Hollywood as appealing as he'd imagined.

“In South Dakota, you will run into people at the coffee shop who are actively involved in their community, and you can build something based on the simplest conversations.”

Sean Covell



“I realized that quality of life, meaning fancy cars and big houses, was not what I wanted,” he says. “Quality in life matters more. That's people. Being able to run into somebody you know in the grocery store was a really important perspective shift and helped me move back to Deadwood.”

Sean currently resides in Boulder, Colo., but credits the success of *Porter the Hoarder* entirely to South Dakota. It's where he met Rebecca, got involved with United Way of the Black Hills, and learned that only 32% of U.S. students can read at grade level proficiency. Sean and Rebecca realized the Porter books could serve as a valuable tool in promoting family engagement and improving reading skills.

“In South Dakota, a local community came together, we addressed that problem, and scaled it nationwide,” he says. “I wouldn't know how to do that in Los Angeles. The people there who can make a difference are hard to get to, whereas in South Dakota, you will run into people at the coffee shop who are actively involved in their community, and you can build something based on the simplest conversations.”

“Golden West is literally the base of my being able to exist and put things out into the world from Bridgewater.”

Rebecca Swift

“My favorite part about this town is the quiet – and the people,” Rebecca says. “It’s really shown me this sense of community at a time where I was in over my head.”

Rebecca means that almost literally. Soon after moving into her home, the basement flooded. The first-time homeowner felt overwhelmed, but not for long.



Blending the Arts: Music, Makeup & Children's Books

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"I was helping her clean her room, and I pulled out one of the drawers," Rebecca recalls. "She was hoarding all this candy and wrappers and all kinds of stuff. I was like, oh boy, my little girl is a hoarder! So, I illustrated a little cartoon of her and shared it with Sean. He's like, wow – this is a cool idea. Would you mind if I take a crack at it and write a book? That's how our business relationship started."

It's been a fruitful working relationship; there are currently six *Porter the Hoarder* books in print, and the pair hope to eventually flesh out 64. The books are interactivelook-and-find adventures where young readers help Porter locate hidden objects. They have donated 30,000 books through foundations like United Way, which distribute books for free to children in South Dakota, Utah, Montana, and North Dakota. Their long-range plans are to turn *Porter the Hoarder* into a full-fledged educational program that will teach kids different skills and let them know that it's okay to express emotions.

Golden West Provides Seamless Collaboration

Even with Rebecca in Bridgewater and Sean living in Boulder, Colo., the pair can collaborate seamlessly ... thanks in part to the service Golden West provides.

"Golden West is literally the base of my being able to exist and put things out into the world from Bridgewater,"



she says. "Whether it's uploading videos to Instagram, keeping in touch with business correspondence on Facebook, just doing research for everything and being able to transfer these drawings for the books. I send every single one out wirelessly to our graphic designer in Mexico. I couldn't achieve any of this if I didn't have Golden West!"

With another 58 planned *Porter the Hoarder* books, Rebecca has plenty to keep her busy ... but she hasn't given up on music. She recently built a recording studio in her home and is writing a song for every book. When she and Sean visit schools, they'll play an acoustic guitar song about Porter to entertain the kids.

"It's cool when all the worlds intertwine," she says. A decade ago, I didn't think I would be making music for a children's book series with a business partner that I met at an audition where I wanted to act!"

New Directors, Bylaws, and Amendments 69TH ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Over 200 members attended the 69th annual meeting of the Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative on Saturday, Sept. 25. They heard from the president and general manager, elected board members, and decided on proposed amendments to the co-op's articles and bylaws.

Board of Directors President Jeff Nielsen opened the meeting by discussing how both members and Golden West employees displayed the strength and adversity to rise above the challenges of the past year. He shared how Golden West's fiber optic network kept everybody from business owners to high school students connected and productive.

"Our fiber optic network proved invaluable during the pandemic," Nielsen said. "In a year when more people than ever found themselves working and learning online, strong and reliable internet connections were crucial – and Golden West's network delivered."

Investing in Infrastructure, Employees & Communities

Golden West General Manager and CEO Denny Law emphasized how Golden West's investments in infrastructure provided members with the resources needed to navigate through an unprecedented situation. He also mentioned the importance of investing in employees and supporting the communities served by Golden West – even on a statewide level.

"In a difficult year, the Golden West Cooperative raised \$13,282 for Feeding South Dakota last December," Law said. "Thanks to generous contributions from individual employees and members of the Board of Directors, fewer



Pictured from left to right are Murdock Arthur of Cactus Flat (District VI), Dave Assman of Mission (District IV), Jade Hlavka of Howes (District I), and Bart Birkeland of Gregory (District VII).

people in South Dakota worried about going hungry this year."

Voting on Directors, Articles & Bylaws

Following Law's address, the membership elected four people to four-year terms on the board of directors. Those elected include Jade Hlavka, District I; Dave Assman, District IV; Murdock Arthur, District VI; and Bart Birkeland, District VII.

In addition, the membership approved three of four ballot items covering proposed amendments to the Golden West Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

Golden West drew names and gave away more than 25 prizes. Dan Paulson of Quinn won the \$500 grand prize.

Thanks to all the members who attended this year's meeting. The 70th annual meeting will be held on September 24, 2022.

605+000-0000 = 10-Digit Dialing

Prepare for 10-Digit Dialing June 2022

You may have heard that the FCC began allowing 10-digit dialing in South Dakota on Oct. 24. It's a great idea to get into the habit now, but please note that Golden West won't require 10-digit dialing until June 22, 2022.

When calling from one Golden West line to another, you are free to dial either seven or 10 digits between now and then. For more information visit thechangesd.com/10-digit-dialing.

'Tis the Season for Holiday Movies

It's the most wonderful time of the year if you're into feel-good holiday movies. Looking for something other than jolly ol' St. Nick and his stable of reindeer and elves? Cable networks trot out festive original programming every December. And don't worry ... you can still catch your favorite classics, too!

Family Friendly Originals

The Hallmark Channel is renowned for its original made-for-TV movies, and holiday-themed films are a network staple. Family friendly offerings this season include *Sister Swap: A Hometown Holiday*, *A Dickens of a Holiday!*, *Sugar Plum Twist*, *Christmas for Keeps*, and *'Tis the Season to Be Merry*.

Lifetime is no stranger to 'tis-the-season fare and has a full slate of

original holiday films on tap, as well. Titles include *Christmas With a Crown*, *Holiday in Santa Fe*, *Maps and Mistletoe*, *Ghosts of Christmas Past*, and *Candy Cane Candidate*.

GAC Family is a Hallmark Channel spinoff that launched in Sept. 2021. The network is airing an original holiday movie every Saturday and Sunday night in December. Check out *A Christmas Miracle for Daisy*, *A Christmas Star*, *When Hope Calls Christmas*, and *Joy at Christmas*, among others.

Free Thanksgiving Preview

Looking for something other than turkey and shopping to occupy your time? **HBO and Cinemax are offering a FREE PREVIEW for Golden West cable TV subscribers from Wednesday, Nov. 24, through Monday, Nov. 29.**

You can enjoy new episodes of series favorites like *Succession*, *Insecure*, and *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. You'll also be able to catch a variety of movies including *Wonder Woman 1984*, *Tom and Jerry*, and *In The Heights*.

Take advantage of this free offer for a break from the holiday madness!



Catch the Classics

Even the biggest Grinch in Whoville can't resist those time-less holiday classics when they roll around every December.

Freeform is your go-to for holiday favorites all month long. There's something for everyone, from live-action flicks like *Home Alone*, *The Santa Clause*, and *Jingle All the Way* (and their assorted sequels) to animated classics. *Frosty the Snowman*, *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, and *Santa Claus is Comin' to Town* are all on this year's lineup.

Broadcast networks are also getting into the act.

A Charlie Brown Christmas is an all-ages favorite airing on SDPB Dec. 19, while NBC is showing *It's a Wonderful Life* on Dec. 24.

If you take repeat viewing to the extreme, both TNT and TBS are running a 24-hour *A Christmas Story* marathon beginning the evening

of Dec. 24 and continuing through Christmas Day.

Can't get cable? Streaming is always an option. *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* (HBO Max, Amazon Prime Video), *White Christmas* (Netflix), *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (Disney+), *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (Amazon Prime Video), and *Elf* (Amazon Prime Video) will give you plenty of variety.

Cozy up, pass the eggnog, and get into the ho-ho-holiday spirit this season!



Don't Go Phishing And Other Tips to Avoid Becoming a Cybercrime Victim

Cybercrime might not strike the same terror in hearts as other high-profile criminal activities, but it can still leave victims traumatized. Business cases generate the biggest headlines, but even individuals can suffer serious consequences.

About 594 million people across the globe are affected by cybercrime every year. Sometimes, the steps you don't take are every bit as important as those you do.

A "To-Don't" List

Cyber criminals are increasingly brazen in how they obtain personal information and can fool even the most cautious. The following cyber security tips will help you avoid becoming a victim.

- 1. DON'T click on links from unknown sources.** Cyber attackers can lure you into clicking on links that appear enticing. Resist the urge; one click of your mouse leaves you susceptible to malware – malicious files used to steal data and damage your device or network.
- 2. DON'T reuse passwords over multiple accounts.** It's tempting to use the same password across different sites, but cyber criminals reap the rewards of your complacency. Thwart them by using a password manager like LastPass or Dashlane instead.
- 3. DON'T skip two-factor authentication.** Two-factor authentication, which requires a mobile phone number or email address, offers an extra layer of protection. You'll have to verify your account whenever you log in from a new device, but it may save you lots of hassle later.
- 4. DON'T answer truthfully when setting up security questions.** Giving false answers to security questions is a shrewd way to keep one step ahead of cyber bad guys.



Personal details are easy for hackers to obtain. Make up your answers instead. Use a password manager or come up with unique answers you'll easily remember.

- 5. DON'T give away confidential information over the phone.** Cyber tricksters often turn to the telephone to gain access to confidential data. Don't fall for this! When in doubt, hang up and call the company back directly at a published number to verify their legitimacy.
- 6. DON'T overshare online either.** Avoid sharing sensitive or personal information online. Be wary when posting photos taken on GPS-enabled devices; these contain embedded geotags that reveal your location. Disable this setting before uploading photos.
- 7. DON'T make sensitive transactions over nonsecure websites.** Only make online purchases and financial transactions over a secure website. That means the web address begins with "https" instead of "http" and includes a padlock icon.
- 8. DON'T use outdated software.** Make sure antivirus programs and other security software is current. This offers protection against the most recent security threats, which continuously evolve. Update your operating system when prompted, as well.

Golden West Offers Help

For added peace of mind, consider protecting your computer with VIPRE Advanced Security software from Golden West. The software is included when customers bundle internet with another Golden West service, and it can be installed on up to three devices. It can also be purchased for an additional small fee added to your monthly bill. goldenwest.com/vipre



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Customer Appreciation **GIVEAWAY**



**WIN
BIG
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Register to **WIN** at:
theexchangesd.com/giveaway

Those without internet access can call
1-855-888-7777 to register.

You must be a Golden West residential customer and be at least 18 years of age to register. Only one entry and prize awarded per household. No purchase necessary. **You must list a local merchant's name when you register. The retail or service-based merchant must be in a Golden West community.** The value of the gift certificate must be spent with only one merchant. Entries close at noon MT on Friday, Dec. 10. Drawing will be held and winners will be posted on the Golden West Facebook page and website by 5 p.m. that day.

Win a Local Shopping
GIFT CERTIFICATE

- 1 GRAND PRIZE** \$500 Local Shopping
- 2 RUNNERS-UP** \$250 Local Shopping
- 20 WINNERS** \$100 Local Shopping



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