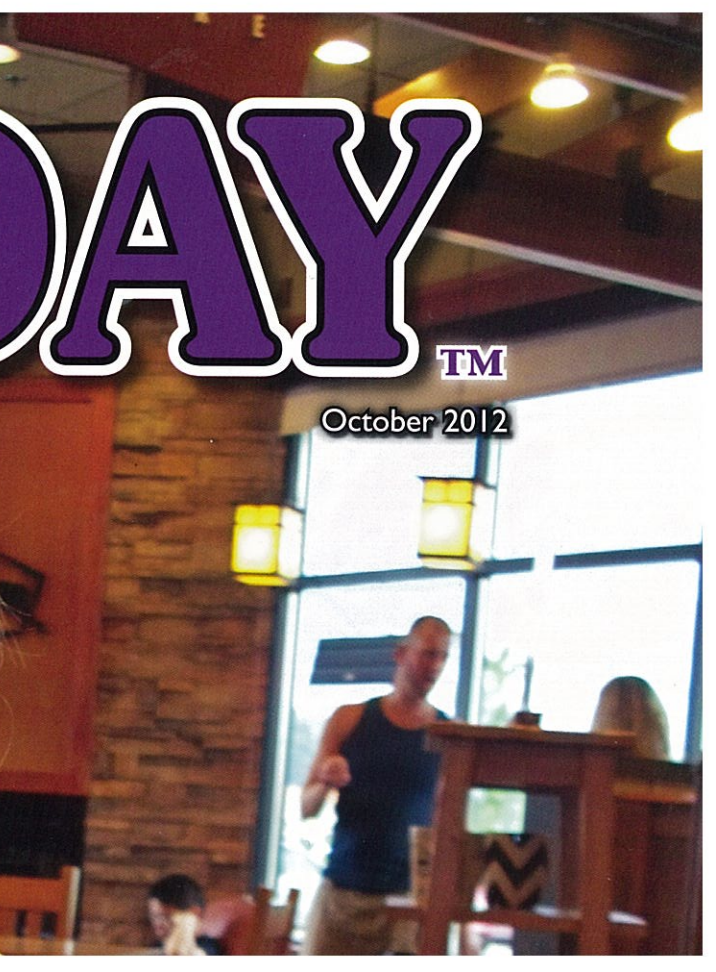


generations of

TODAY

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Breaking Through

By Bob Crouse
Photos by Hanna Medin



“Our dad’s grandfather was a Lutheran pastor. Dad’s parents were a very strong influence in his life, and in turn, in how we were raised,” said Catherine, the middle child of the seven Medin siblings—Paul (PJ), Drew, Shon, Catherine, Sara, Debra and Daniel—ranging in age from twelve to twenty-one.

“Dad came from Northfield, our mother, Kim, from Delano. They met while attending Concordia College in Moorhead.” After their marriage, the Medins moved to Nerstrand. Jon’s father knew former governor Al Quie, who owned land near Nerstrand and sold it to Jon in 2000. Jon is an attorney; Kim is a former assistant special education teacher at Northfield Middle School. She also has home schooled her children.

Although becoming an FBI agent turned out not to be part of God’s plan for Jon, his second desire came true. The band formed when Pastor Fred Herzog left Cannon Community Church to form another congregation. “Because the new church did not have a building in which to hold services, meetings took place in our

home,” Catherine explained. “My brothers—PJ, Drew and Shon—and myself were the worship band, with PJ on drums, Drew on piano, me as the vocalist and Shon played bongo. The band’s name, Breakthrough, came from a painting by a church member, Fred Sommers. That picture still hangs on a wall at our home.” The Medins are the worship band at their current church, Word of Life Christian Center, a non-denominational congregation in Rochester.

“One day, Dad brought home a bass guitar for Drew. PJ took over on piano and Shon played drums. This was when we wrote our song, ‘The Lament,’ based on the Book of Lamentations. Sara joined us on vocals, and now plays piano, as well. Deb mans a table at concerts, selling our CDs. Daniel is an upcoming musician.”

Breakthrough’s first performance, other than as worship band at its own church, took place at Vang Lutheran Church, for a National Day of Prayer breakfast.

“When we first began playing our own music, it



Left: Breakthrough: PJ, Sara, Catherine, Shon and Drew Medin. Second: The name for the Medins' band came from the title of a painting by a member of their church. Third: PJ and Catherine at a recent Breakthrough performance "Under the Bridge" in Wabasha, Minnesota. Right: Catherine is the lead vocalist for the band.

For the children of Jon and Kim Medin of Nerstrand, Minnesota, forming a band fulfilled a dream of their father. Jon actually had two dreams, the first: to be an FBI agent. A band composed of his children was Jon's other wish.

was not well-received by our parents. It was not what they were used to. Our music could be described as 'experimental progressive rock' or 'hard rock.' Some have said it is too eclectic to be called hard rock. Our songs are different, and that is intentional. We don't want to be boring, complacent or stagnant."

Practice takes place as often as possible, when everyone is together. That can be difficult at times. PJ and his wife live in Winona. "When he comes home, which is usually a couple times a week, we practice the entire day, with a few short breaks for meals," Catherine said. "When he's not home, the rest of us practice separately, building our individual musicianship."

Venues Breakthrough has played include Club 3 Degrees, Shiloh Temple, Living Word Christian Center, Black Hills Children's Home, Sonshine Festival, Autumn Ridge Church, Winona State University, Bethel University, and the Epic Event Center. "Our audiences range from one hundred to one thousand. Music industry reps we met judged us as 'too random.' At a performance in Nashville, one member of the audience told me, 'I don't care what others say.

I want to buy all your stuff!' Last year, at the Sonshine Festival in Willmar, a girl said our CD had helped her through the summer." Breakthrough has produced two CDs, "Waiting" and "The Eve of War." A third CD is in the works.

On November 14, 2010, Catherine and her father left for Switzerland. Jon is an attorney of intellectual property for Thompson-Reuters and now works from Zug, Switzerland. Shortly thereafter, Kim, Sara, Daniel and Deb moved to Zug and joined Jon. Both Catherine and Sara traveled back and forth between Switzerland and the U.S. for performances, about once every two months during the school year. "I stayed an average of three weeks on each trip home, playing as many shows as possible on the weekends." The band has performed in both Switzerland and the U.S.; this past August Breakthrough began a one-month tour that included the states of New York and Illinois and other locations in the Midwest, as part of "The Extreme Tour."

Breakthrough writes all of its own music, something

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that can be a very time-consuming process. “We write, collaborate and practice intensively,” explained Drew, “in order to forge music of the highest quality that we are capable. For example, Shon and I spent about three hours, alone, developing a fourteen-second section of one of the songs. It was incredibly productive! I have also been working much more closely with Catherine on better writing for her vocal range, so we can coax the best tone color and emotional expression as possible from our music. As our teamwork has been steadily improving, our shared vision has also become clearer. We are playing with the idea of creating a continuous story that stretches from ‘The Eve of War’ into our next album, and potentially beyond. One of the concepts Catherine, Shon and I have discussed is that the new music could relay the message of the perversion of worldly love and what it is like to actually love like Jesus.”

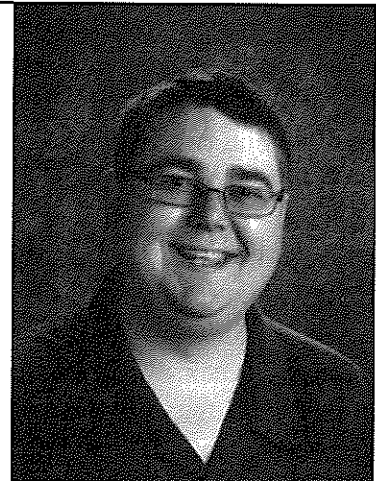
For the first two CDs, each member wrote selections and brought the finished product to the rest of the group to share ideas and work on changes. “We try each other’s suggestions,” Drew explained. “We are trying to do more of the writing together at the beginning of the process to keep changes to a minimum.”



Above: Catherine and Sara performing at a recent concert. At the end of the summer, Sara joined her parents and younger brother and sister in Switzerland for the coming school year. Catherine began taking classes in Faribault at South Central College.

Re-Elect Dan RECHTZIGEL

Goodhue County Commissioner



ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- ✓ Fought to preserve funding for veterans services.
- ✓ Pushed for Goodhue County to help fund the SEMCAC dining program for seniors.
- ✓ Strong advocate for ensuring that we have affordable housing in our communities.
- ✓ Committed to keeping a tight rein on taxes and spending.

MOVING FORWARD:

- ▶ I will defend services that promote the health and well-being of seniors.
- ▶ I will work on finding a long-term solution to address the transportation needs of seniors who no longer drive.
- ▶ I will continue to fight to preserve programs that enhance our quality of life.

Prepared and paid for by the Rechtzigel Volunteer Committee

All the Medin children have been home schooled. PJ, Drew and Shon took PSEO (post-secondary enrollment option) classes the last two years of high school. PJ and his wife and Drew, who married in June of this year, attend college in Winona. Shon will soon begin college at St. John's University. Catherine recently began PSEO this year. "I'll be in the classroom at South Central College in Faribault. Last year I took classes online, but they were not college courses."

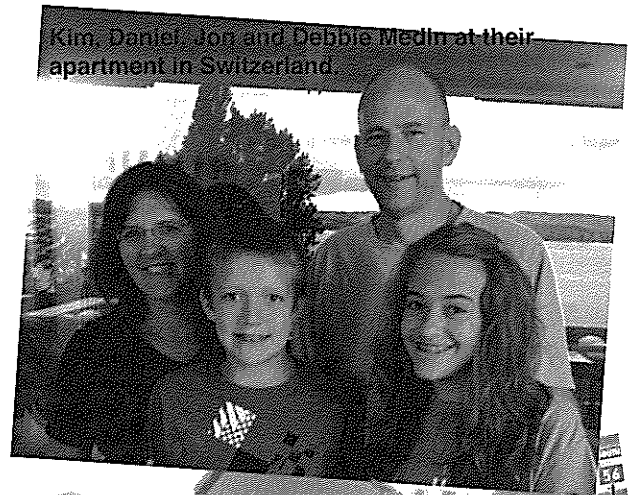
I asked Catherine how she felt about home schooling versus standard public education. "There are advantages to home schooling. You can move at a faster pace, resulting in more free time to practice music. You are not surrounded by the distractions of public and private schools. Schedules are flexible for traveling. The disadvantages? There are limited extra-curricular activities and there is no class rank—honors, valedictorian, et cetera—as you are usually the only one in your grade!

"Over the years, I have learned there are a lot of false assumptions about kids who are home schooled. One, that they are shy. The ones I know are very outgoing, more so than public schoolers. We grew up not only having many friends our own age, but also learned how to behave and converse with people much older than we are. Another misconception is that we don't spend much time in the 'classroom.' It's not that we spend less time learning, it's a more concentrated schedule. We are not slowed down by those who may not be as committed to receiving an education. Our work is done faster and finished with high grades."

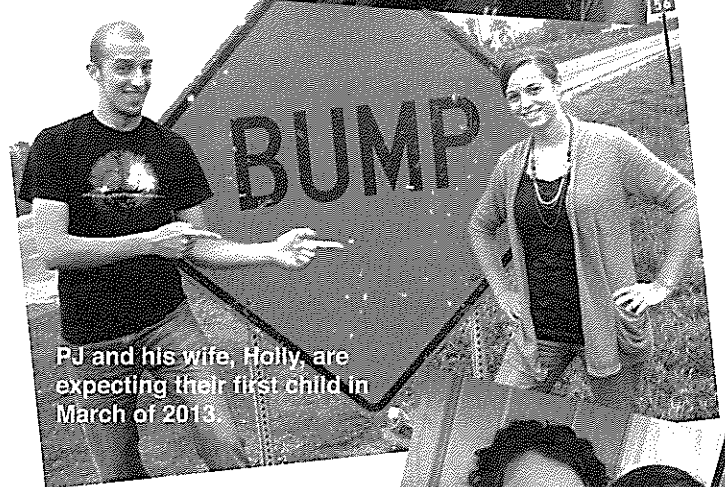
The Medin siblings all watch out for one another. "We want what is best for each of us," Drew and Catherine said. "Not just what will make someone happy for the moment, but what will bring long-term happiness and fulfillment."

"For instance," Catherine continued, "as the oldest girl in the family, when the time comes for me to court, whoever that person may be must gain the approval of my three brothers and my father. I have no problem with that. There are standards and rules that we are all expected to follow."

As for the future, "Our band wants to be able to reach people and bring them to Christ through our music. Otherwise, there would be no point to what we do. And, hopefully, we'll make a living by doing this," Catherine concluded.

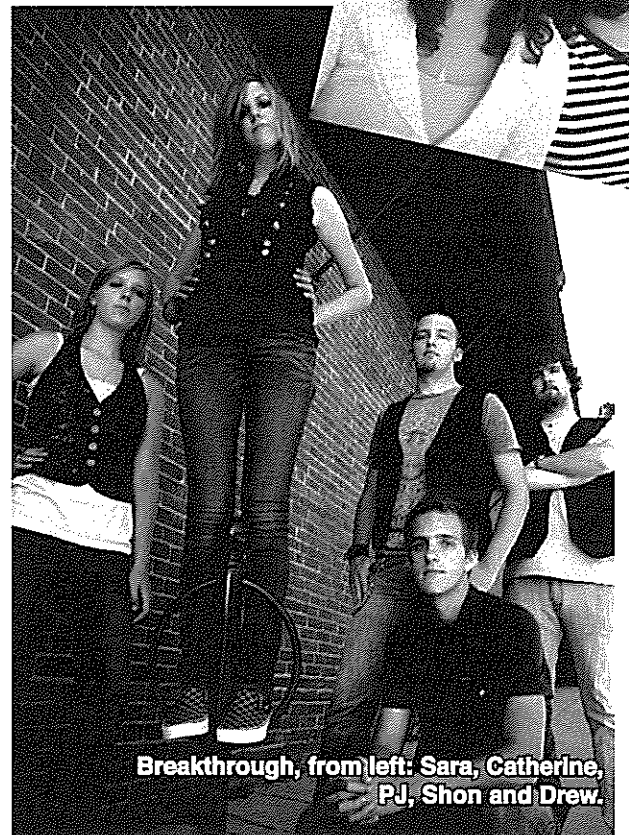


Kim, Daniel, Jon and Debbie Medin at their apartment in Switzerland.



PJ and his wife, Holly, are expecting their first child in March of 2013.

Hanna and Drew Medin. Drew married in the summer of 2012 and is a recent graduate of Winona State University. He and his wife, Hanna, live in Nerstrand.



Breakthrough, from left: Sara, Catherine, PJ, Shon and Drew.