

PEOPLE WE KNOW

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Members of a Twin Cities publishing family will be honored for their contributions to the community.

star catchers



WHAT: Star of the North awards, launching Barnes & Noble's Celebration of Minnesota Publishing

WHEN: 5 p.m. Thursday

WHERE: Barnes & Noble in the Galleria, 3225 W. 69th St., Edina

Tickets: Free

Call: 952-920-0633

University of Minnesota's St. Paul campus to test his ideas about bookselling. He also owned Books for Travel on Grand Avenue.

Brett Waldman practically grew up at the Bookmen, sweeping floors and packing books when he was a kid. He was president of the Bookmen and Waldman House Press by the time his father and Stillman sold the book distributorship in 2002.

Since publishing is in Brett's blood, he incorporated Tristan Publishing the following year and took over some of the Waldman House titles when his dad retired. Among Tristan Publishing's books are "The Station," a gift book incorporating the famous essay by Robert Hastings, and KARE-TV weekend anchor Rick Kupchella's children's picture book, "Tell Me What We Did Today."

These days, the Waldman-Stillman trio who worked so closely for years have split up.

Ned Waldman spends most of his time at his vacation home in Wisconsin. Stillman, who sold his bookstores, is concentrating on finding good regional writing for Nodin Press to publish. His

month.

Brett Waldman is enthusiastic about two new Tristan books. "Raising You Alone" is by Warren Hanson, and Kathy Cramer speaks to those whose loved ones are in pain with "If I Could Be Sick for You for Just One Day."

Thursday's Star of the North awards ceremony launches Barnes & Noble's Celebration of Minnesota Publishing, which runs through December.

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Norton Stillman sold Micawber's Bookstore, but his Nodin Press is going strong.

BY MARY ANN GROSSMANN
Pioneer Press

Brett Waldman, owner of Golden Valley-based Tristan Publishing, has teamed up with Hope for the City to give 1,000 copies of his press's new title, "I Am Loved," to Hurricane Katrina evacuees coming to Minnesota.

Waldman learned that generosity of spirit from his father, Ned, and his father's cousin, Norton Stillman.

This week, the Waldmans and Stillman will receive Barnes & Noble's Star of the North Award for their positive impact on local book distribution, bookselling and small press publishing.

Their story begins in the early 1960s, when Ned Waldman and Stillman (who consider themselves brothers because they were raised as siblings) began delivering paperback books to mail-order grocery

ally grew into Bookmen Inc., one of the largest book distributorships between Chicago and the West Coast.

Tucked into the cavernous Bookmen building in Minneapolis' warehouse district were offices of Ned's publishing company, Waldman House Press, and Stillman's Nodin Press.

Ned Waldman always described his books as "those that touch the heart." Among them were "A Cup of Christmas Tea," which has sold more than a million copies, and children's books featuring PEEF, the Christmas bear. St. Paulite Warren Hanson's "The Next Place," published by Waldman House in 1997, is read at funerals, used in grief groups and offered as comfort to families who lost loved ones in the 2001 terrorist attack in New York.

Nodin Press publishes a wide variety of books, from "25 Minnesota Poets" to biographies of local poets, breadwinners and



...es. Then, buying business, which they ran out of the family's produce warehouse, eventu-

...spot is team. In 1972, Stillman opened Micawber's Bookstore near the

...looks, an anthology of original stories by Minnesota mystery writers that debuted this

Ned and Brett Waldman of Waldman House Press made Holiday parade history in 2001, when PEEF, the Christmas Bear, became the first character from a locally published book to be featured.



SCOTT TAKUSHI, PIONEER PRESS

Bernice Sisson, center, has been working with women in abusive situations for some 20 years and was recently recognized with a statewide award. Also pictured are Loretta Farrar, left, of Maplewood and Char Thompson, right, of St. Paul.

giving voice

BY KAY HARVEY
Pioneer Press

Bernice Sisson set out to aid older abused women suffering in silence.

Bernice Sisson noticed that the older participants in battered women's groups she facilitated didn't say much.

When she asked why, they said, "Because the other women's problems seem so much worse."

Sisson didn't see older women's problems as any less difficult than those of young mothers in the group. She just saw them as different. That planted the seed of an idea. Before long, she was facilitating groups tailored to older women's needs.

Sisson, 82, received a Distinguished Service Award this sum-

mer from the Minnesota Public Safety Department's Office of Justice for her visionary work. She now leads two groups for women in their 50s and older. She helps them get access to resources to leave their abusers if they choose. And she is co-cre-

ator of the Minnesota Network for Abuse in Later Life, designed to connect services statewide and fuel awareness of older women's issues.

A big question abused women ask is "How can I leave?" For older women, find-

Who: Bernice Sisson

Age: 82

Residence: St. Paul

Family: Seven surviving children, 14 grandchildren, five great-grandchildren

Vocation: Battered women's advocate since before the movement began

ing workable answers can be particularly challenging. "Usually, they're desperate when they come to a group," she says.

After seven years of working with older women, she knows most of them don't want to make big changes. Many contin-

ue living with abusive husbands. Many resist leaving homes they've lived in for years. Retired couples' money — and health insurance — can be more inextricably tied than in working years. For women who weren't employed or worked at low-level jobs, there's often a feeling the pension and Social Security check belong to the breadwinner.

"One woman I worked with didn't even know how to write a check," Sisson remembers. "She never felt her husband's money was hers."

She recognizes varied patterns of abuse. Power and control issues can surface with a husband's illness. Or with retirement, when some men replace the power they wielded at work with control over their wives' actions or comings and goings. Often there's a long history of violence, control and isolation. Some women don't know help exists, "or even that it's against the law to beat or hit people in your family," Sisson says.

For older women, talking about their abuse can be humiliating, she says. She often accompanies them to request an Order for Protection. Hardest to admit is abuse by an adult child, which can surface as financial exploitation, emotional or physical abuse or worse. "It's too embarrassing to say, 'This is what my son did.' Especially if it's sexual abuse."

The weekly groups she leads

group for women 50 and older. 952-884-0376.

■ Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women. 651-646-6177 or www.mcbw.org

■ Minnesota Metro Area Crisis Line, 24-hour shelter hot line. 651-646-0994

■ Minnesota Network for Abuse in Later Life. 651-636-5311, www.mnall.org or info@mnall.org

■ St. Paul Intervention Project. 651-645-2824

— Kay Harvey, Pioneer Press

typically draw six to 10 women. The meetings become a valuable social outlet for many participants. Someone almost always brings a pie or a cake. Some women attend several sessions before talking about their situations. Some come back for support whether they're making a change or not. Others return to say, "This is how I got out of it."

Sisson has seen many transitions, not all of them in her work. She completed a college degree when she was 62. A daughter, Catherine, died of breast cancer in her arms at age 37. Her husband of 60 years, John Sisson, died this year.

Sisson's work with battered women began in the early 1970s while answering an all-purpose crisis line. She helped to shepherd Women's Advocates, a St. Paul shelter for women and children that opened in 1975 and became the first battered women's shelter in the country. She has worked directly with abused women in the St. Paul Intervention Program since 1987. At 82, she remains passionate about eroding a societal mindset she says a 30-year-old movement hasn't yet wiped away.

"To a lot of people, domestic violence still isn't against the law," she says. "Until somebody's murdered."

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