



Keeping it *simple*

ND author shares lessons of finding hope



Photos special to The Forum

Above: Sue Hamilton teaches the Wahl girls how to make pillowcases. **Top:** Sue Hamilton gives a sewing lesson to 5-year-old Kaydee.

Minot, N.D.
Ajigsaw puzzle with no edge pieces provides a fitting visual for Sue Hamilton's often complicated life, which, by her own admission, has often lacked a strong perimeter.



ROXANE B. SALONEN
Faith Conversations

with advice on how to keep things simple?

"It's the lessons God has taught me, and the ones I have so furiously fought against," she says in "Every Day Simple: Living a Life of HOPE in a Complicated World."



Hamilton

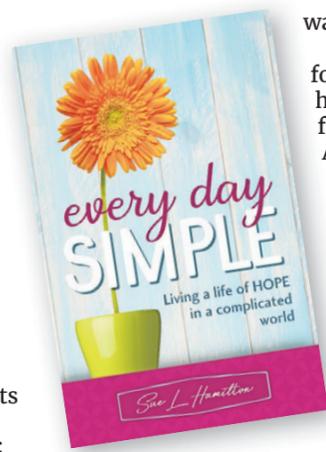
A recovering addict and survivor of a near-fatal motorcycle accident that instead left her upright with only a scratch or two, her life has been anything but mess-free. So why write a book replete

"When I analyze the complexities

that I have imposed on myself, I see how difficult I have made life," Hamilton writes, insisting that only God can bring the puzzle to its beautiful completion.

"Every Day Simple," her third book, is a companion of sorts to her memoir, "Carried by Faith: From Substance Abuse to a Life Filled with Miracles," telling the story of the accident that turned her upside down, and right-side up — literally.

"I believed my life was over, yet God had other plans," she writes of that day. "I was looking at the ground, and as I raised my face... I was thinking, 'Heaven sure looks like Sturgis.' Then I realized I



"Every Day Simple" is now available on the author's website or Amazon.

wasn't dead! I was ALIVE!" Believing God saved her for a purpose that day has provided impetus for every day since. And those who know Hamilton well testify to how effectively she's carried out that mission.

A young mother's assessment

MaryAnn Wahl met Hamilton in 2007 when she, too, was struggling with addiction. Invited to a church meeting for young adults, Wahl was prayed over, and in an instant, she says, "all desire for drugs and alcohol

were removed miraculously." "Sue was like a mentor for this group of young people trying to figure out how to live life when things got challenging," she says,

SIMPLE: Page B6

Find a place to park or pitch

New resource answers question: "Where Should We Camp Next?"

By John Myers
 Forum News Service

DULUTH — Some people go back to the same campsite year after year, sometimes weekend after weekend, and love their experience of familiarity and the friendships made.

But other folks who tent or trailer or camper their summer free time away like to explore, and the new book "Where Should We Camp Next? A 50-State Guide to Amazing Campgrounds and Other Unique Accommodations," (paperback, Sourcebooks \$12.99) is

made for them. It's a travel guide of sorts for campers not afraid to hit the road and try new territory.

Written by longtime RV camping gurus Stephanie and Jeremy Puglisi, the new book came out in March with more than 300 campground destinations detailed. It follows their similar book on the basics of family camping (not location specific) published in 2020, "See You at the Campground: A Guide to Discovering Community, Connection and a Happier Family in the Great Outdoors," and

tilts toward the glamping side of camping — places accessible by the family RV or SUV and suitable for all levels of camping experience.

Don't have an RV, camper or tent? There are ample entries of unique places with cabins, yurts and even treehouses and covered wagons to rent in the woods or on the prairie.

The authors say they did extensive homework to track down the best camping spots in each state. They also have been to many of the locations in person as part of their road trips for their podcasts "RV Atlas," and "Campground of the Week" that have run hundreds of episodes.

"There are a few camping directories here and there, but most of them are focused on certain types of campgrounds — and most of them are just glorified phone books with basic information about amenities and facilities," the authors said about their book. "We wanted to write a book that covered the great diversity of the American campground experience right now. We wanted a book that reviewed rustic campgrounds and flashy RV resorts."

"Where Should We Camp Next?" starts with an 18-page overview of the modern

CAMP: Page B6

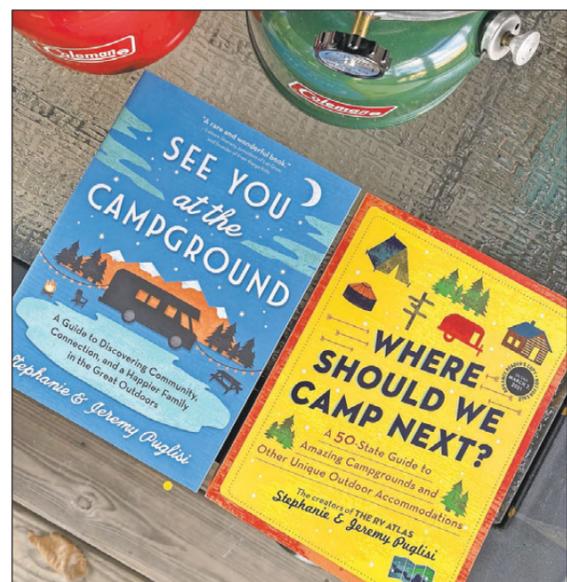


Photo courtesy of Sourcebooks

The new book "Where Should We Camp Next?" by Stephanie and Jeremy Puglisi, out this spring, is a sequel of sorts to the authors' 2020 book "See You at the Campground." The new book serves as a travel guide of sorts with reviews on more than 300 campgrounds and glamping cabin locations in all 50 states.

Evading unwanted e-vites

Editors note: The following column was originally published in 2018.

Dear Annie: I read your column in my local paper, and you seem to respond in an unbiased manner, so I am turning to you for advice.

Over the past few months, I have received invitations to a 1-year-old's birthday party, a graduation and a wedding reception (not the wedding). In each case, the inviter was an acquaintance whom I know casually. I don't consider any of them to be a close friend, especially the graduate, whom I am "friends" with on social media but haven't seen or spoken to in over a year



ANNIE LANE
Dear Annie

and a half. All of the invitations were sent electronically. I am wondering whether the new world of technology has cheapened the tradition of celebrations. I can't help but feel that the invitations were not sincere and I was just included on mass lists of invitees gathered from social media. Receiving them has made me feel used, in a way.

I do not plan on attending any of the events. The dilemma I am facing is whether to send gifts. I was always taught that if I receive an invitation to an event, I should give a present even if I am unable to attend. However, I am confused about what is expected in situations such as these.

I want to do the right thing but not feel taken advantage of. — Unsure in Texas

Dear Unsure: An

invitation is not an obligation. That goes for both gifts and attendance. You should worry about buying a gift only if you're going to attend, and you should attend only if you truly care to. If not, sending your regrets and best wishes is more than sufficient.

Dear Annie: How do I tell a guy I just started dating that I can't stand his mustache? First of all, it is not attractive at all. Then there is the matter of how, when he kisses me, it feels like sharp spikes going into my skin. I have dated and kissed other guys with mustaches and did not feel the same discomfort, so I'm not sure what the deal is.

I like him and enjoy his company. I don't want to hurt his feelings. What can I do? — 'Stache-Scratched

Dear 'Stache-Scratched: Speak up in behalf of

your upper lip. After all, it would be hurtful to your new boyfriend if you wriggled away whenever he went in for a kiss and he didn't know why. There are plenty of remedies he could try — such as trimming less often and softening it with conditioner or coconut oil — short of shaving his mustache. Although you'd prefer he just shave the way it looks, that's not your call. To insist that a partner change his or her appearance is to be controlling. You can politely make your feelings known. (For example, you could say, "I would love to see you without a mustache. I bet you'd look even handsomer.") But ultimately, it's up to him. Who knows? With time, the mustache might actually grow on you.

Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com.

BRIEF



Special to The Forum
Hard rock band Steel Panther.

2 more shows announced for Sanctuary

FARGO — Sanctuary Events Center will rock this summer with a pair of shows announced by Fargo-based promoter Jade Presents.

Steel Panther will bring its tongue-in-cheek twist on the glam rock music of the 1980s and '90s to town on July 14. Tickets go on sale at 10 a.m. today for \$31, plus fees.

Hard rock act Pop Evil and opener Zero 9:36 and Brkn Love will turn up the volume on Aug. 18. Tickets are \$25 in advance or \$30 day-of-show.

Tickets for both ID-only shows are available at <https://jadepresents.com> or by calling 866-300-8300.

— By John Lamb

SIMPLE

From Page B5

describing Hamilton as "super practical and blunt — but not in a bad way."

"She's consistent, and to me she seems perfect, but she's also relatable," Wahl says. "She's a really good example for me, and her life is in these books."

"Every Day Simple" offers a "step-by-step on how to live" in a way that might seem impossible at first, Wahl says. "But you get to see how she's actually gotten there, and it's really cool."

Hamilton's steady voice through the years, now memorialized in her written words, has provided Wahl not only needed companionship, but a pathway forward — especially in navigating the oftentimes challenging roles of mother and wife, she says.

"Early on, she gave me this idea of putting notes in my husband's lunchbox as an encouragement," Wahl says, noting that Hamilton's advice has helped bring a peaceful simplicity and joy into her own hectic life.

"I found some of these notes saved and stuck in a book. So that's been an



MaryAnn Wahl and author Sue Hamilton.

Special to The Forum

encouragement to me."

In "Every Day Simple," Wahl discovered a new way of seeing herself through God's eyes, she says, and began finding ways to apply that to her mothering, such as through incorporating her love for music into family life by "making up silly songs" to brighten their moments together.

"It's about embracing the way God wired me and letting that be a gift to my girls."

A longtime friend's response

Carol Boen met Hamilton years ago when they both worked in advertising with competing companies. She's watched her friend

change from someone very serious about life to being seriously in love with God, she says.

As she read "Every Day Simple," Boen says she found each chapter "an adventure," and was tempted to slow down as she neared the finish, not wanting it to end.

"I've always believed in God, but at times, I haven't known what to do with that," Boen says, noting that Hamilton's propensity for sprinkling her anecdotes with Scripture makes the book sparkle.

"Like Sue, I can be a busybody, and I'm always wanting to win people over," she adds, noting that after reading one of the chapters, "Anchor Your Day," she

realized, "Oh gosh, I didn't talk to God today. That chapter reinforced that I need to do that more often."

Another chapter on prayer reminded Boen that we often talk more than listen in prayer. "God already knows what I need. But I have to sometimes wait and see what he's going to provide."

Hamilton explains that the book is unconventionally divided by topic, so if someone has a certain need during a specific season or day, they can jump to a section addressing that particular challenge. Chapters on marriage, prayer, food and self-worth bring readers something useful to ponder.

"And it's such a perfect title for where we're at right now," Boen says, noting the need for more simplicity. "Sue's handing us ways for this to happen in a book," concluding with a bonus — a section filled with Hamilton's favorite tried-and-true recipes.

Making connections

Hamilton didn't start off wanting to write a book; she's more comfortable speaking her story, she says. But her desire to share what she's learned — often the hard way — led to recording her journey

and insights.

"Just by having that one-on-one conversation, you can learn from people where they're at," she says. "I ask questions, like, 'What do you want out of life? What are your dreams? How do you feel today?' From there, you sometimes get into deeper conversations about faith and God."

But faith requires relationship first, Hamilton says. "And often, when I walk along the journey with someone else, it's not just me helping them, but they help me, too."

Such as in her relationship with Wahl. "I got to watch her coming from this terrible time, where she was mentally entrapped," Hamilton says, "and now she's a mom who is doing such a great job, home-schooling her kids, and with such calm. She's amazing in terms of what she's allowed God to do for and in her."

Hamilton says she especially likes to impart what she calls "the heritage of women" to younger generations. She's taught others to make lefse, can and sew — things often passed in our modern world — in the same way she learned how to make rosettes years ago from her older friend, now 85.

Recalling the importance of mentorship, Hamilton keeps a sign with a Scripture verse on her desk from Psalm 78, encouraging that "each generation should set its hope anew on God."

"There's so little personal interaction anymore. We just go ask Google or Pinterest to help us find the recipe and pick out the paint color of our walls, or redo a piece of furniture, instead of calling that friend," Hamilton says. "We can be mothers and sisters to many people."

And whenever she loses her courage for reaching out, Hamilton reminds herself that "God goes before me, he's behind me, and he's beside me, holding my hand."

Indeed, she affirms once again, the journey is never a one-way route.

"It's about, 'Where am I going? Where are you going?'" she says, and, speaking with an eye toward eternity. "Where will we go together?"

"Every Day Simple" can be purchased through Hamilton's website, www.suelhamilton.com, or on Amazon.

Salonen, a wife and mother of five, works as a freelance writer and speaker in Fargo. Email her at roxanebsalonen@gmail.com, and find more of her work at Peace Garden Passage, <http://roxanesalonen.com/>.

CAMP

From Page B5

American camping experience, with information on public and private campgrounds, RV resorts, Hipcamp.com, Harvest Hosts, Tentrr and glamping experiences like Under Canvas and Collective Retreats.

The intro also asks you to pick your category of camping personality — from newbie to wilderness tenter to RV aficionado — and then pick your campgrounds based on your own tastes and preferences.

The states are divided by region and each state has 5-11 campground reviews. The reviews are broken into two categories: "Best in State" and "Also Great." Sometimes the slimmest of margins separated the two, the authors note, and sometimes a campground made "Best in State" because it has a wider appeal than a comparable one in the "Also Great" category. (They didn't rate the campgrounds, as some guidebooks do, instead picking only ones they liked and excluding those entirely that they did not like.)

Be warned, however, that because the authors liked these campgrounds, other folks probably do, too. And that means many may already be filled for prime weekends and midsummer weeks for 2021. In the days of COVID-crazed campground crowding, it may be best to use the book as a planner for 2022, or at least later this fall after kids are



Photo courtesy of Minnesota DNR

Itasca State Park was named one of Minnesota's "Also Great" places to camp or rent a cabin in the new book "Where Should We Camp Next? A 50-State Guide to Campgrounds and Other Unique Accommodations."

(hopefully) back in school. (For example, both Minnesota State Parks mentioned by the authors are already full for many weeks this summer, as are most of the sites already at Voyageurs National Park.)

The book also has more than 100 sidebars to accompany the campground reviews with travel tips, regional highlights, culinary highlights and historical tidbits.

For Minnesota's 'Best in State' category, the authors picked:

The Pines of Kabetogama Resort — with RV sites, RV rental, cabins and even a house to rent on beautiful Lake Kabetogama. (thepineskab.com)

Bearhead Lake State Park near Ely for its natural beauty and seclusion, access to great

fishing and the quintessential Minnesota northwoods feel with RV access. (dnr.state.mn.us)

Baker Park Campground/Three Rivers Park District near Maple Plain, just 30 minutes west of Minneapolis. Not exactly northwoods, but social and family-friendly, with camper cabins to rent. (threeriversparks.org)

For Minnesota's 'Also Great' picks:

Lambs Resort & Campground near Schroeder, a very popular North Shore destination. Still family-owned and with a half mile of Lake Superior beach, the campground offers both RV amenities and a North Shore feel. Log cabins to rent, too. (lambsresort.com)

Itasca State Park, Minnesota's first and oldest at the

head of the Mississippi River near Park Rapids, the authors say the park has "top-notch" lodging in addition to wooded campsites on 32,000 acres with more than 100 lakes. (dnr.state.mn.us)

Lebanon Hills Regional Park Campground, just outside St. Paul, is close to both Twin Cities downtowns, the Mall of America and all of that — but also has lakes, trails for hiking and biking and a swimming beach. (co.dakota.mn.us)

The authors also spend a page describing **Voyageurs National Park**, with more than 150 individual (remote) boat-to (or canoe or kayak-to) campsites. (nps.gov)

For North Dakota's 'Best in State' category, the authors picked:

Cottonwood Campground, Theodore Roosevelt National Park, near Medora, with world-class wildlife watching in the Badlands, this campground sits along the banks of the Little Missouri River. Simple sites, half reservable and half on a first-come, first-served basis. (nps.gov)

Cross Ranch State Park, near Center, along a wild stretch of the Missouri River with ample space for hiking and mountain biking. Spacious RV sites and rental yurts. (parkrec.nd.gov)

Fort Ransom State Park, near Fort Ransom, with what the authors described as super-cool yurts and covered wagon camping rentals. Many RV sites and a section dedicated to campers who bring their own horses with. (parkrec.nd.gov)

For South Dakota's 'Best in State' category, the authors picked:

Rafter J Bar Ranch, Hill City in the Black Hills, which the authors call "one of the best campgrounds in the country." Spacious sites with beautiful views of the Black Hills. Heated pools and just 15 minutes from Mount Rushmore. (rafterj.com)

Blue Bell Campground, Custer State Park, near Custer, within the scenic park loaded with wildlife, a beautiful campground with Blue Bell Lodge within walking distance. (gfp.sd.gov)

Cedar Pass Campground and Cedar Pass Lodge, Badlands National Park, near Interior, with less-than-spectacular campsites but in an astonishingly beautiful part of the Badlands with unparalleled views. "The best hikes in the park are nearby," the authors note. (nps.gov)

Elk Mountain Campground, Wind Cave National Park, doesn't accept reservations, so have a backup plan if you don't get one of 61 sites in this beautiful campground with great nightly interpretive programs. (nps.gov)

For Wisconsin's 'Best in State' category, the authors picked:

All campgrounds in the southern part of the state, including **Devils Lake and Mirror Lake state parks** near Wisconsin Dells and **Jellystone Park Camp-Resort** near Milwaukee.