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**JAHNNA LEE  
RANDALL**  
GRAND JURY  
WINNER

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SUCCESSFUL  
ARTISTS

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FOR FILMMAKERS**

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# N C O U R R T R H E E N R T N S

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## Once upon a time ... in Balsam Lake (and Hollywood)

Unity graduate, a one-person film production company, settles for being just the actress in John Deere film production

Gary King | Editor

LOS ANGELES/BALSAM LAKE – About a decade ago Unity High School graduate Jahnnalee Randall typed in “West, Hollywood” on her GPS and set out for a career in acting.

“I thought if I really wanted to take acting seriously as a profession, I needed to learn in Los Angeles,” the 31-year-old said recently. “I didn’t know a single person who lived there so I went to MySpace – yup, I know, old school – and searched people who lived there and asked them if they could give a Midwest girl any tips who wanted to move to LA for acting.”

Fast-forward to this summer when she starred in a video produced by John Deere as part of the company’s “How do you #run-withus,” social media campaign. It features both Jahnnalee and her father, David Randall, and filmed at the Randall farm in rural Balsam Lake where David uses John Deere equipment. That includes a riding lawnmower he uses to keep his 70-foot by half-mile long airplane runway – which is federally registered for emergency landings – mowed and ready to use. Gizmo the Chihuahua, Jahnnalee’s dog, also found a spot in the video.

Jahnnalee pitched the story idea to John Deere during a casting call she responded to. They liked it and after a year of communication between Jahnnalee and the company it became the script for John Deere’s first video in a series of 8. It includes scenes of her and her father working on the farm, including her mowing the runway, using a John Deere riding mower.

The gig was actually a nice break for Jahnnalee, who only had to use her acting talent. Normally, when producing her own videos and films under her own production company - Why Wait Productions, she takes on the roles of writer, director, producer and camera operator and oversees sound/light, wardrobe/makeup, visual effects, colorist and her favorite role as dog handler/trainer.

“Gizmo the Chihuahua is such a joy to work with on set. He is the most talented actor I know! He knows how to hit his marks and he loves being in front of the camera. He even has his own IMDb page! He’s a legit Hollywood actor!”

Gizmo is in every one of her videos.

### The journey

Getting into film production seemed the obvious solution to finding acting gigs for Jahnnalee who has produced hundreds of

comedy short films and has won awards for her work. When she’s at her dad’s farm she uses his basement for her production studio.

So how does a country girl from Polk County make it to Hollywood and build her own production company?

“I got started in modeling when I was 12,” she noted. “My dad would drive me to my modeling shows and auditions in the Twin Cities. When I turned 19 MTV picked me up for a TV show called ‘Meet or Delete,’ which they filmed here in Balsam Lake in 2008 and I was flown to New York to try modeling out there.”

Immediately after the MTV show, Jahnnalee was picked up by CBS for a show called “Big Shot Live,” to model for Roxy and she was flown to Los Angeles. A producer there thought she should look into acting. She tried to enroll in acting classes

but that’s when she decided that if she was serious about acting she should head for Los Angeles.

After posting her plea for help and advice on her MySpace page, someone informed her she needed to save at least six months of living expenses just in case she couldn’t find a job right away. She saved up for six months and packed up her car for the trip west.

“My mom was nice enough to drive cross country with me,” she said.

She enrolled in acting classes but was soon informed she would need an agent to get work. And she also needed an acting reel, or a video resume of her talents.

“But since I hadn’t gotten any auditions yet I had no work to put together an acting reel so my acting teacher at the time informed me I should create my own content to create a reel,” Jahnnalee said. “I bought a DSLR video camera on credit and started filming. After my projects were finished people told me I should put them into film festivals, so I did and to my surprise not only were they accepted but I was winning awards.”

She was on a new mission. Still an actor, but also a filmmaker and a director, storyteller and producer, hoping to make things happen for herself instead of waiting around to be discovered by someone else.

She created three award-winning web series including “Dating Disasters,” best web series, best script and Grand Prize Jury Award at the Hollywood & Vine Film Festival and nominated best web series at Idyllwild International Festival of Cinema; “2FUR1,” best web series at Idyllwild International Festival of Cinema, best web series and

See *Once upon a time*, pg. 2



Some of the characters Jahnnalee created and plays in her videos. - Photo provided



Jahnnalee Randall and Gizmo the Chihuahua are all smiles to be just in front of the camera for the John Deere production crew. Jahnnalee wears all the hats for their comedy short films, as she is every crew member in her film company, Why Wait Productions. - Photos by Jahnnalee Randall unless otherwise noted

LEFT: Jahnnalee Randall and her father, John, and Jahnnalee’s dog, Gizmo the Chihuahua. - Photo from John Deere Instagram site

## Once upon a time/from page 1

best actress at Hollywood & Vine Film Festival, best webisode at Independent Film Quarterly Film Festival and outstanding lead voice actor and supporting actor at LA Web Series Festival; and the "Pet Peeves" web series; and an award-winning short film called "Lost in Time."

But after three years of creating web series and short films with a crew and cast, Jahnnalee started running into other problems.

"People showing up late, not showing up at all, being negative, complaining, wanting me to write them more lines even if the story didn't need that dialogue and the list goes on and on. I was becoming exhausted with how much more people wanted me to do. I was already the director, writer, lead actor, producer and editor, which is a lot for one person to do on a film set, so when people were coming to me with their negativity, personal problems and wanting me to create more stuff for them, it was getting to the point it wasn't fun anymore."

But she loved filmmaking too much to give it up.

### Why wait for opportunity

"I love to create stories for people to make them feel better because this world can be a very hard place from time to time and laughter is truly the best medicine to distract from that pain for a little while," she said.

So she thought, "I'm already wearing so many hats, why not just do them all?" For the past four years she has been a one-person show and crew. She acts all the characters, even the guys, which has been a total of 12 characters so far with three new characters on the way.

Jahnnalee's films/videos can be found at her own YouTube channel at youtube.com/whywaitproductions. One of her favorite recent comedy shorts is "Explosive Birthday Party," which she released in April of this year.

"It is the highest-viewed video on the channel, with over 367,000 views," she said. "It was actually just screened at the "SCREAM it off SCREEN" film festival at the Parkway Theater in Minneapolis.

When searching for a name for her production company, Jahnnalee wanted something special – something with meaning.

"And then it dawned on me - Why Wait Productions ... as in why wait for opportunities when you can create them yourself?"



Jahnnalee Randall and Gizmo the Chihuahua are shown as their interview is filmed with the John Deere production crew. - Photos by Jahnnalee Randall unless otherwise noted

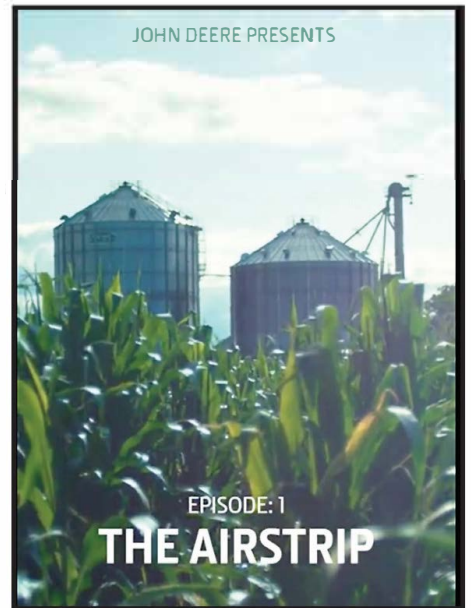


David Randall uses his John Deere Gator to pull his Cessna airplane before takeoff on his private airstrip in rural Balsam Lake.



Actor Gizmo the Chihuahua enjoys being a farm dog and loves his John Deere classic tractors.

The first of the latest social media promotion videos produced by John Deere came about after Jahnnalee Randall pitched the idea to the company with the video being filmed at her father, David's, farm in rural Balsam Lake. See the video at [instagram.com/p/B100CemF8k/](https://www.instagram.com/p/B100CemF8k/). - Photo from John Deere Instagram site





# JAHNNA LEE RANDALL

By ANGELA M. HUTCHINSON

## *dating* DISASTERS

created by

Jahanna Lee Randall



## GRAND JURY WINNER '14

**D**riven. Diligent. Dedicated... Those adjectives and these industry hats: actress, writer and producer and director, best describe Jahanna Lee Randall. Oh and let's not forget recipient of the 2014 Grand Jury Award at the 3rd Annual Hollywood & Vine Film Festival. Randall also nabbed two other HVFF awards, Audience Best Web Series and Best Script in a Web Series Award. Originally from Wisconsin, this triple-threat artisticpreneur moved to California to reach her dreams of working in the entertainment industry. Randall is tenacious, single-minded, focused, and loves working on anything artistic. Most mornings she is busy filming, by the afternoon she is either on-camera as an actress or auditioning. Then at night she writes until the break of dawn... and then it all begins again.

As an actress, her résumé boasts numerous features, pilots, independent films, award-winning web series, shorts, as well as television, music video, commercial and radio appearances. Through this vast array of experiences, Randall realized that she is interested in both acting and behind the camera work. She no longer felt the need to wait around for auditions and decided to shape her own destiny by creating opportunities and launching her own production company, Why Wait Productions. She has been writing and directing ever since and all of this has led her to the creation of "Dating Disasters." She was inspired to create something funny, widely relatable and geared towards modern audiences. Once this was all determined, Randall set out to build a core team and she could not have asked for a more passionate group of talented and dedicated individuals who make for an amazing and collaborative team effort.

Hollywood & Vine is pleased to share with you an intimate interview with Ms. Jahanna Lee Randall, a true rising star.



*“Filmmaking is teamwork and no one person can do it alone.”*



**What was the inspiration behind your HVFF award-winning web series, “Dating Disasters”?**

I recently finished the festival circuit with my first web series, the award-winning, “2FUR1,” and wanted to create something new and geared towards modern web-viewing audiences. I took into consideration, not only today’s short attention-spans, but also relatability of content. I pondered this at length while attending YouTube and filmmaking classes, as well as film seminars. Then one day it finally hit me: What seems to be on the mind of every single person? DATING!... and/or how difficult it is to find someone this day in age... ding ding ding... a light bulb went off and I set out to build a powerhouse production team to work in front of and behind the cameras.

Season One’s nine episodes were shot across ten days, and most in a single day. We couldn’t be happier with the amazing work of the entire DD team. We hope you enjoy watching our series as much as we enjoyed making it!



**What was your favorite on set moment?**

Everyday. I was blessed with an amazing team that it didn’t feel like work. We weren’t stressed and everything ran smoothly. It was like we were all in sync with one another. This isn’t the first project I’ve created so I have been building a solid team and have kept the motivated, dedicated team members to keep moving forward. I hope one day to build Why Wait Productions like Adam Sandler did with Happy Madison. Where he works with the same team. I would like to create my Why Wait Productions family!



**Which artistic craft do you enjoy most?**

Acting is my number one (writing comes a close second), but I have to produce or things won’t get done. I was tired of auditioning everyday, booking things and then never getting the projects back because they would either not look that good or never get finished. I finally said enough waiting. I am going to create my own film company, Why Wait Productions, and make stuff actually happen!



**How did you fund your web series?**

Student loans...Horrible I know. But I love filmmaking and the only way to create films is with money. With being a struggling actress, auditioning like 15 times a week, it is hard to have another steady job to help pay for my endeavors. Also a couple of the wonderful DD team members chipped in for renting and crafty (Somya, Marco, Alex, Drew, Katherine, Anne & CJ)! Filmmaking is teamwork and no one person can do it alone.



**What is it like collaborating with your talented dog Gizmo?**

Amazing, but sometimes he can be a little diva since he always wants to play the lead! But he sure is a natural in front of the camera so I just put up with his demands from his own trailer.



**How did you find your cast and crew for your web series?**

From previous projects I created and bringing on

a few new people that I knew were talented and driven on the projects they've created. I did a casting call in Hollywood to audition some parts that weren't already cast by actors from my previous films. It also helped to have a bunch of content that I already created so people could see my work. Amazingly enough they liked it and wanted to be apart of the team.



**Finish this sentence Breaking into Hollywood is all about....**

...making connections and building a dedicated motivated team to grow together to make it in the industry.



**What's next for you?**

I am finishing up writing my comedy feature film and in the works of creating a new vlog web series called Dear YouTube that will be released this spring. I'm also trying to build more notice with our YouTube channel that has all of Why Wait Productions content on it. I'd love for people to see the channel and know that we exist. Then our web series could possibly be picked up on Netflix and/or Hulu since in today's generation it seems that a lot are leaning more towards online. It's wonderful that anyone that sets their mind to their filmmaking dream can now create it due to DSLR's and the Internet! Just go out there and create your own destiny!

[www.YouTube.com/JahnnaRandall](http://www.YouTube.com/JahnnaRandall)



*Angela Marie Hutchinson is the author of various literary works, including four books, several screenplays and a plethora of magazine articles in Hollywood & Vine, Diversity Careers in Engineering & IT and Valley Lawyer. She resides in Los Angeles with her husband of twelve years and three young children.*

## JAHNNA LEE'S FAVES

**Award Show:** The Oscars

**Gadget:** Phone. I take so many pictures!

**Animal:** Dog (Gizmo the Chihuahua of course)

**Song:** Hurt by Johnny Cash

**Books:** The Secret & Outliers

**Pie:** Cheesecake or Rhubarb Crisp

**Hair Color:** Blonde on me, Brunette on guys

**Bar:** Mom's because it's the best Packer place in LA! Makes me feel a little bit like I'm back home in Wisconsin!

**Soda Pop:** Dr. Pepper

**Holiday:** Christmas & My Birthday



GOVERNMENT

THE NEW WAY  
TO HOLD A  
BOARD MEETING  
PAGE 10



CHURCH

PANDEMIC  
CHANGES BUT  
DOESN'T STOP  
EASTER PARADE  
CURRENTS



Leader readers  
10,000

# INTER COUNTY Leader



Serving Polk and Burnett counties in Northwest Wisconsin

EVENTS

A FUN AND  
CREATIVE ESCAPE  
PAGE 24

## Changes allow for more business, activities to open

State updates business  
guidance with extended  
Safer at Home Order

WISCONSIN – With the extension of the Safer at Home Order through May 26, there are some changes to allow for more businesses and activities to open back up, while other changes help

See Safer at Home extension, page 8

## BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY



Did you know there are some teachers who don't have internet at home? This is how they Zoom with their kids on a cold day. St. Croix Falls third-grade teacher Melissa Sladky uses the school's internet under a blanket to chat with her students. - Photo provided

• Sheriff says extension of Safer at Home is "overreach of state government" Page 3

• Wisconsin lobbyists call for state to let bars, restaurants reopen May 1 Page 8

• Governor announces Badger Bounce Back Plan Page 8

• Republicans ask state Supreme Court to block latest Safer at Home Order Page 15

## Polk County selects new chair

Chris Nelson is only  
candidate, asks for a "team  
approach"  
Page 11

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# Balsam Lake native offers online film class for beginners

## A creative escape

Mary Stirrat | Staff writer

**BALSAM LAKE** – With many people now spending much more time at home, Unity graduate, actor and filmmaker Jahnnalee Randall is offering a fun and creative escape that has the added bonus of teaching participants something new.

Slated to teach a community education class at Unity this spring and finding the opportunity canceled due to COVID-19, Randall and her “son,” Gizmo the Chihuahua, are offering the class online through Zoom. She plans to start her weekly film classes Wednesday, May 6. (See registration information at the end of this story.)

Officially a member of Unity’s Class of 2006, Randall finished high school at age 16 to pursue a career in modeling. Realizing that she wanted to create her own opportunities rather than wait for them, she started her own film company, Why Wait Productions, in 2012.

“The past four years I have been a one-and-a-half-person show and crew where I act all of the human characters and I do all of the crew work and postproduction work,” she said. “Yes, Gizmo is the half.”

The duo tends to focus on lighthearted comedy, especially appreciated in these times, and they have been making the most of the COVID-19 Safer-at-Home Order.

Randall didn’t always do all of the crew and postproduction work herself, but after depending on others for a while she made the deliberate choice to go it on her own.

“I want to learn and understand how things work,” she said. “Plus, if I was able to create my own projects, I would know for sure that it will get done because I know I would show up.”

Randall has created numerous web series and short films that have garnered her 28 awards and nominations. “Lost in Time,” inspired by her brothers, won many film festival awards.

Joining TikTok last November, she and Gizmo have more than 60,000 followers for their “feel-good comedy sketches,” including multiple viral videos.

Even in high school, she said, she would “run around with a camera filming things.” Technology was far different and the process took a great deal of time, but she cut together scenes of friends and family and overlaid it to music.

One of these early efforts was a sort of precursor to “Lost in Time.” It was a video she created about her brothers going to Iraq that she used in the talent show in the Balsam Lake queen pageant.

“I want to start these film classes to inspire and show people they are capable of creating things that interest them,” she said. “If it interests them it also interests other people out there.”

Randall has been featured in the In-



Even though their flight took place before the stay-at-home order, Gizmo the Chihuahua felt that protective gear was needed in order to be safe. The two were flying to New York at the beginning of March to be part of “The Mel Robbins Show” on CBS. - Photos courtesy of Why Wait productions

ter-County Leader three times. The first was in August 2007 when she was selected for an episode of MTV’s reality show “My New Life” and embarked on an adventure in New York.

In 2015 the Leader featured her and her short film, “Lost in Time,” based on her own experiences with depression, withdrawal and trying to cope when her two brothers were deployed to Iraq. Jahnnalee was the director, producer, writer, editor and lead actor in the film, and was seeking financial help for the postproduction phase.

Finally, just last fall, the Leader did a story on Jahnnalee, her career, and a video in which she starred that had recently been produced by John Deere. The video was filmed at the Randall farm in rural Balsam Lake and also features her father, David.

### About the class

In her upcoming class, Jahnnalee Randall will help participants learn story-

telling to create one-minute-and-under films or advertisements to put on social media accounts like YouTube, TikTok, Instagram and Facebook.

“You don’t need expensive production gear,” she said. “All you need is yourself and a smartphone that records video.”

Each week students will be asked to bring filmed materials and will learn how to transform their clips into a story.

“No experience needed,” Jahnnalee said. “There is no age limit, either. People in their 70s can still create videos.”

You can check out her film company’s website at [whywaitproductions.com](http://whywaitproductions.com). To learn more about class cost and registration email her at [info@jahnnarandall.com](mailto:info@jahnnarandall.com), or go to the Why Wait Productions Facebook page.



There is nothing like an in-home spa day when the COVID-19 quarantine won’t let you go out, according to Gizmo the Chihuahua. For this comedy sketch Jahnnalee Randall sewed Gizmo a headwrap out of a purple washcloth, since his head is too tiny for store-bought wraps. “I added a chin strap to help it stay on,” she said. “I needed to make the cucumbers on his eyes into glasses, using clear fishing line, so they would stay on. Gizmo is such a good sport!”



Jahnnalee Randall and Gizmo the Chihuahua in a behind-the-scenes shot taken during the Balsam Lake shooting of “Delivery Quarantine,” a comedy short film. “Even though it was my close up,” said Jahnnalee, “Gizmo still wanted his picture taken.”

# Jahnna Lee Randall

From Local Actor to  
LA Award Winner

By Joe Winter

From directing, writing, and starring in the 2012 short film *Puppies and Tiaras* to creating an award-winning military drama film about Iraqi soldiers, Jahnna Lee Randall has covered a lot of ground since moving to L.A. from the New Richmond area a few years ago—as an actress, model, and producer. (There was even an award-winning web-based series in the mix.)

Randall burst onto the local scene when Hudson, Wisconsin's Twisted Grille hosted a preview party for the MTV™ reality show, *Meet or Delete*, where she swapped places with another model, from New York City, for a week. And it was all caught on camera (including her replacement's awkwardness with cows). Back then—the early 2000s—Randall had been modeling in the Twin Cities; that led to an appearance on the MTV show, as well as others like it.

On the night of the *Meet or Delete* preview party, all levels of the Twisted Grille were packed with people, along with the MTV cameras. In her fuzzy, white-themed boots and sweater, Randall was the star of the show. And her light has continued to shine ever since.

Randall built her own film companies (yes plural), and her success in L.A. started with *Puppies and Tiaras* along with another short video, *Fake Pocket Dial*, both in 2012. Randall reports that her schedule was packed as she spent her mornings auditioning, days filming, and nights writing. She often worked side by side with canine actor Gizmo the Chihuahua.

Eventually, Randall decided to stop waiting for gigs and propel her career by starting her film company, Why Wait Productions. Why Wait produces video series, short films, and sketches. Randall's work has won five awards for best web series at various film festivals.

After airing 11 YouTube shows called *Dating Disasters*, Jahnna then started shooting a music video, which brought her back to Minnesota and Wisconsin for filming.

Parallel to the differences in population, Randall's Midwest ac-



complishments have been magnified many times in Los Angeles. Her work has taken many forms, birthed from her already-stellar St. Croix County roots.

Across the border, Randall's modeling and acting career blossomed in the Twin Cities. Just a few short years later, Jahnna has spent hours behind the camera, too. She reports,

*We are now doing the festival run for my military short film, Lost in Time. We have been accepted into three film festivals so far.*

She recently won the best acting award at the Hollywood & Vine Film Festival and at the time of our interview was preparing to attend the Idyllwild International Festival of Cinema, where *Lost in Time*<sup>1</sup> was nominated for six awards: Best Actress, Indie Spirit Award, Mary Austin Excellence in Directing, Mary Austin Excellence in Producing, Mary Austin Excellence in Screenwriting, and The Marshall Hawkins Awards for Best Musical Score.

*Fingers crossed, we win a couple of those. The Mary Austin awards are only for women, which is really cool!*

Randall worked tirelessly on her many roles for the military drama: she wrote it, directed it, completing the filming and editing last fall.

*My inspiration for the film came from my two older broth-*

<sup>1</sup>View *Lost in Time* at [youtube/G4as8sWSuUE](https://youtube/G4as8sWSuUE)

ers who served in the Iraq war. I wanted to create a story that showcased the other side when soldiers went off to war.

She also has released a new YouTube series called #GirlProblems<sup>2</sup>. The first five episodes are currently online with more currently being filmed.

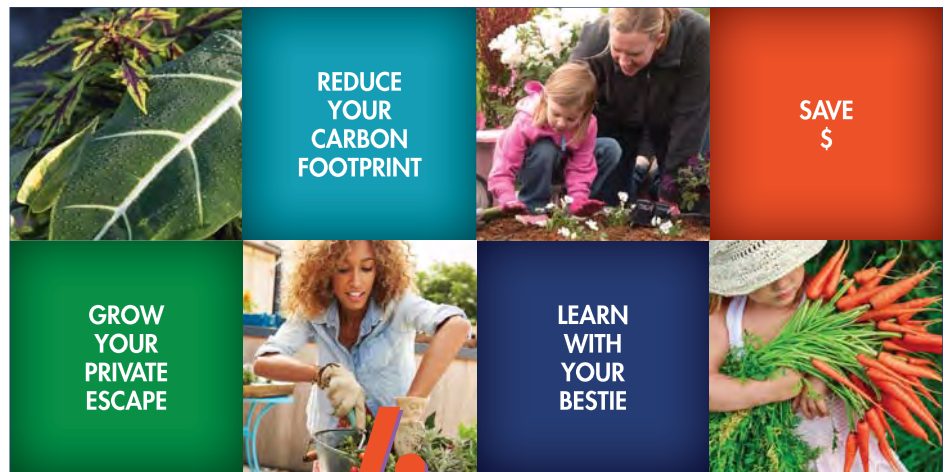
With a cast of characters as varied as adorable animals, demystified soldiers, and people with dating difficulties on a reality show of her making, what motivates her the most?

*Ooh that's a tough question ... which have I enjoyed the most? I love acting, and that was the reason I moved to LA, but then I fell in love with writing ... So I decided to write my own characters and then realized I actually wanted to write scripts, so I created my film company Why Wait Productions ... Then directing came shortly after, when I got to bring the story from paper to screen. I have always been writing, since I was a kid, but never realized I could actually do it as a career. I did it more for fun when I was younger, not really thinking about it ... The project I enjoyed doing the most would be Lost in Time, because the story is so close to my heart, and the fact of how much I have learned from all the previous projects. That's the thing I love about filmmaking: In each project, you will evolve over time, because with practice you just keep getting better and better.*

The tally to date? Three short films, two music videos, four web series, four commercials, and multiple comedy sketches, all within four years. There's more: Randall has been releasing her newest web series called *Pet Peeves*, where she plays twins and all the various characters in the episodes. She releases a new video episode every Tuesday on her YouTube channel, [youtube.com/jahnnarandall](http://youtube.com/jahnnarandall).

*I thought it would be fun to be able to play all the characters—some people that don't know me are convinced there are two of me—because it would be a fun and challenging acting range to do. I'm also writing my horror short film.*

<sup>2</sup>View #GirlProblems on YouTube by entering list=PLRkxB2ZBXOtyo\_B7a7WSVgSikSc8ZKITF.



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## Balsam Lake native's childhood passion is now her Oscar dream

Danielle Danford | Staff writer

LOS ANGELES, Calif. - As a 6-year-old, Jahna Lee Randall could be found with a minicamcorder documenting life on her family's Balsam Lake farm. "I didn't want to milk the cows or do other chores," said Randall, laughing. For Randall, a graduate of Unity Schools Class of 2006, that childhood interest never left, only developing as she got older. At age 12, Randall began modeling, and in 2009, she got her first taste of acting, starring in the MTV show "My New Life." That experience led her to pursue her silver screen dream full time and she moved to Los Angeles, Calif.

"I realized, once I moved out to LA, I should be in filming," said Randall. Two years after moving to Los Angeles, she started to get frustrated with the audition process. Randall explained that auditioning for roles is a roller-coaster-like process, from not always getting an audition for the right role, not getting compensated for time spent auditioning and most often landing small roles on small productions that sometimes don't even get finished.

"I just started getting fed up with all of that, that I figured it was time to create my own production company and start creating my own films, my own stories and create the roles that I actually want to play," she said. Thus, three years ago, Why Wait Productions was born, Randall's own production company.

Since starting Why Wait Productions, Randall has created two Web series, music videos, commercials and three short films. Her Web series are called "2fur1" and "Dating Disasters," which have both received several recognitions. "Dating Disasters" has been recognized for best Web series, best script and grand-prize jury awards at Hollywood and Vine Film Festival and was nominated best Web series at Idyllwild International Festival of Cinema. "2fur1" received best Web series at Idyllwild International Festival of Cinema, best Web series and best actress at Hollywood and Vine Film Festival, best webisode at Independent Film Quarterly Film Festival and lead voice actor and supporting actor at the LA Web Series Festival.

"It is so much better because you are in control of what you want to create," Randall said about starting her own production company. Thus far, most of her work has been comedy based and Randall decided she wanted to show her depth as a filmmaker through a story close to her heart.

"My brothers served in Iraq and I always wanted to create a meaningful drama story, and my first film I ever created was when my brothers went to Iraq ... I am so close with them and it was really hard when they left," she said. Randall's short film "Lost in Time" is the product of that bond. Randall used her personal experiences of depression, withdrawal and efforts to cope when her two older brothers, Justin and Jason, were deployed to Iraq as the basis for the film.

"I started with the concept of showing the perspective of the ones being left behind because in all military movies all you pretty much see is the battle, and I wanted to showcase what families go through instead of just overseas," said Randall, who is the film's director, producer, writer, editor and lead actress. With the help of Gizmo the Chihuahua, Randall's personal pet dog and professional sidekick, the film and lead character get some comic relief.

"He totally steals the show, he is a working actor, he works all the time," said Randall, laughing.

"Lost in Time" has been filmed, edited and is now in the postproduction phase, the final but crucial and expensive phase for any film.

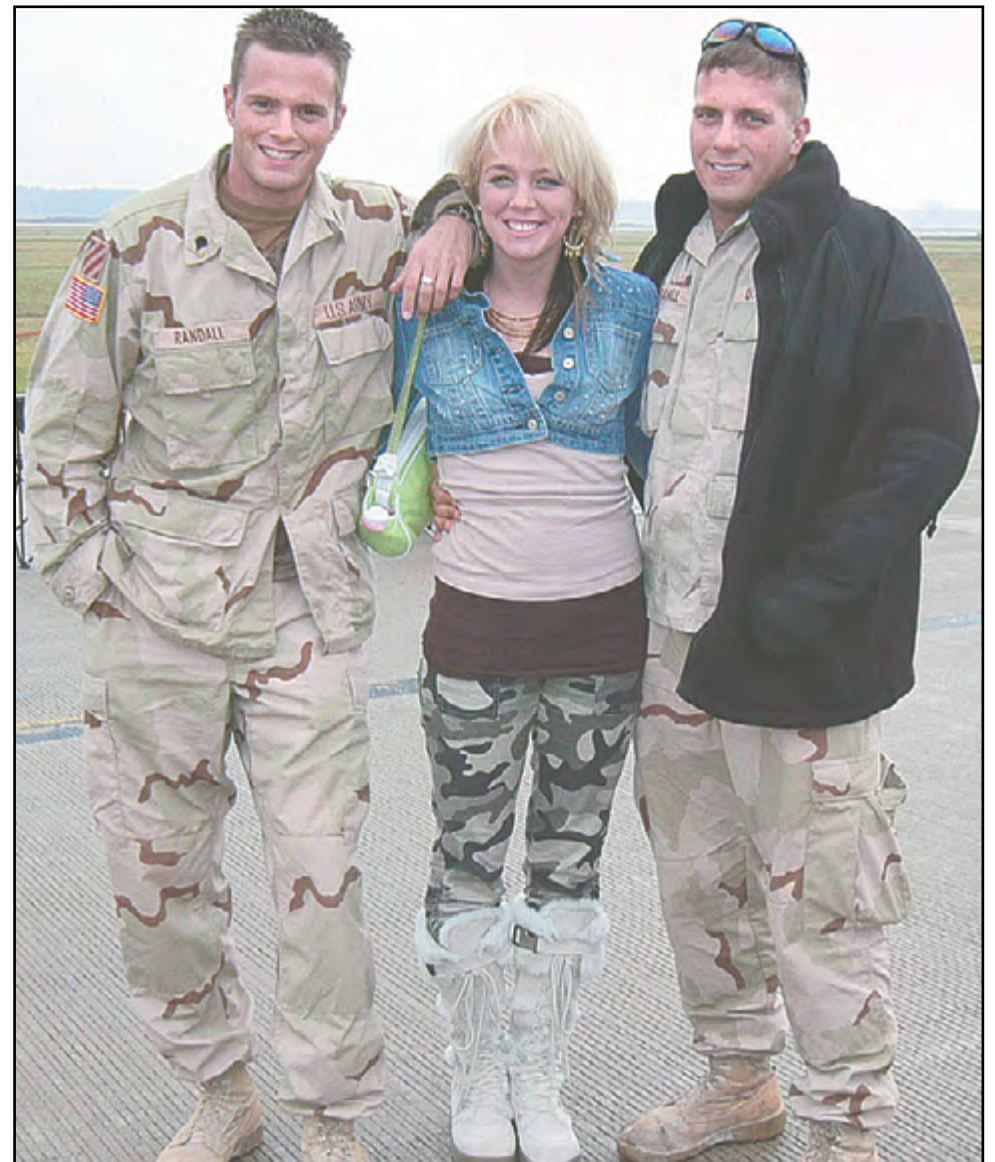
"It would be hugely awesome to get it finished because then we'd send it off to the top film festivals which would be like Sundance, South by Southwest, all the ones that are Oscar qualified," she said. If "Lost in Time" wins grand jury at an Oscar-qualified film festival, it would qualify for the Oscars. Once at the Oscars, Randall's name and the names of the 40 other talented individuals that helped bring Randall's story to life would be seen by top industry producers and directors.

"When you create short films, it's your calling card in the industry so it would just mean so much to be able to tell this story, as well," said Randall.

"Lost in Time" needs \$4,000 to complete postproduction, but Randall explained that they hope to get \$6,000 because the more money they raise the better the film will be overall. Randall has set up a website about the film, its needs and a short video with behind-the-scenes glimpses of the film. Check it all out at [igg.me/at/lostintime](http://igg.me/at/lostintime). Randall's Web series, "2fur1," and episodes of "Dating Disasters" can be watched online at [youtube.com](http://youtube.com).



Jahna Lee Randall, originally of Balsam Lake, gives direction on the set of her most recent short film, "Lost in Time," that is currently in postproduction but in need of funding to finish. Randall is pictured holding her Chihuahua, Gizmo, who also has a role in the film. - Photos submitted



Jahna Lee Randall's most recent short film was inspired by her experience of coping with the absence of her two brothers, Justin and Jason, when they were deployed to Iraq.

### WHAT'S INSIDE



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Fair 2015

INSIDE



2015 ADRC  
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## SPORTS: Osceola Homecoming this week. PAGE 12-13



TELLASTORY PHOTOGRAPHY

### New Osceola royalty

New Osceola royalty was crowned Sunday night at the Osceola Community Fair. Back row: Bry Raddatz, third princess; Mathea Leiskau, second princess; Miss Osceola Neleah Sandberg and Annalise Keezer, second princess. Front row: Katelyn Kirchberg, Junior Miss Osceola; Rebecca Rixmann, little first princess; Little Miss Osceola Savannah Viebrock; Godie Downing, little second princess and Abigail Tempel, junior princess.



SUZANNE LINDGREN | THE SUN

With guidance from their parents and help from their younger siblings, Ali and Jordan Gutha are working to offer peer support to foster kids through their organization, HOPE Foundation.

## Former foster kids build HOPE

BY SUZANNE LINDGREN  
EDITOR@OSCEOLASUN.COM

When teenage siblings Ali and Jordan Gutha hear stories of children in foster care, they can relate. The pair and their younger siblings — 11-year-old Jakob,

10-year-old Alyssa, and 8-year-old Colin — were all foster kids before being adopted by Angel and Karl Gutha. That's why they want to help other kids through the process.

SEE HOPE, PAGE 2

## New John Deere video series takes off in Balsam Lake

BY KELLY HOLM  
SUN INTERN

Jahnnalee Randall grew up with an airstrip in her backyard. Measuring half a mile long and 70 feet wide, it's been there since she was a girl, though neither she nor her father can remember exactly what year it was constructed, only that it was before 9/11. "It's common, everyone has one!" she joked. But there's also sincerity in her remark; the airstrip has become such a day-to-day aspect of life on her family's East Balsam farm that it has ceased to feel unusual for her.

Jahnnalee's father, David Randall, was and is a small-time pilot. But, with jobs both on and off the farm that had been in his family's hands since the Second World War, he hardly had room in the day to drive the 30 minutes to Osceola or 20 minutes to Amery, where the nearest municipal airfields are located.

"I spent twice as long getting to the plane [than I spent flying in it]," David said. So instead of driving to the airport, he decided to make his own.

"This is a federal private airport, so I have to maintain it, 'cause it's on maps, it's emergency landing," you can hear him say at approximately 1:45 of "The Airstrip," the first installment in John Deere's #Run-WithUs Instagram video series of eight. The series aims to share stories of how John Deere products are used in the lives of their faithful customers. David grew up on John Deere machinery, and owns about 45 tractors, most of them antiques. If you were to count

SEE VIDEO, PAGE 24

## St. Croix ArtBarn conducts its first seance with "Blithe Spirit"

CONTRIBUTED  
ST. CROIX ARTBARN

The ArtBarn's ambitious 2019 season continues this month with Noel Coward's "Blithe Spirit." The show revolves around Charles Condomine, an author writing a book about a medium who is supposed to be a charlatan. As part of his research, he and his wife Ruth invite a "real" medium to their house for a dinner party. Madame Arcati, the medium, conducts a seance which they expect will be merely parlor tricks, only something, or rather someone, from Charles' past gets conjured up.

Linda Iwaszko, an ArtBarn veteran, directs the play she has been a fan of since high school. Though "Blithe Spirit" presents its own challenges, both techni-



SUBMITTED

In "Blithe Spirit" an author and his wife invite a psychic medium to their house for a dinner party. Madame Arcati, the medium, conducts a seance where they expect it will be merely parlor tricks, but someone from the author's past gets conjured up.

cally and regarding the wordy dialogue, Linda says the most rewarding part of the entire experience has been her cast.

"I love the cast...

and just watching it all come together." Margaret Mills, who plays Madame Arcati, is having a blast playing the eccentric medium. Previously

making her ArtBarn debut as Lily St. Regis in "Annie," Margaret is back and very glad to be. Margaret ex-

SEE ARTBARN, PAGE 8



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## CWD: Preventing spread

FROM PAGE 7

hours of operation.

For more information regarding where to take your deer for sampling, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search keywords “CWD sampling” or contact local DNR wildlife management staff.

### Baiting & Feeding

There are currently baiting and feeding bans in counties throughout the state. Hunters and landowners should check the DNR baiting and feeding webpage frequently for updates, as new baiting and feeding bans may be enacted in 2019 with new wild or captive CWD positive detections. None of the counties currently identified statewide will be removed from the baiting and feeding ban in 2019.

### Prevent the spread of CWD

The DNR recommends a few simple practices to help prevent the spread of CWD. Ways to help include proper carcass transportation, handling and disposal as well as reporting sick deer, following baiting and feeding information and the cleaning and decontamination of equipment. Another way hunters can help is by following urine-

based scent recommendations.

### Sick deer reports

DNR staff are interested in reports of sick deer and deer with an unknown cause of death, with the exception of car-killed deer. To report a sick or dead deer, contact local wildlife staff or call the DNR's Customer Service hotline at 1-800-847-9367.

### Test results

To view CWD results for a harvested deer, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov), search keywords “CWD results.” Hunters will need to enter a customer ID or CWD sample barcode number to view test results. The average turnaround time from when the deer is brought to a sampling station to when the results are available is typically two weeks.

If test results come back positive for CWD, hunters should follow advice from the Centers for Disease Control [EXIT DNR], Wisconsin's Department of Health Services and the World Health Organization [EXIT DNR] not to consume venison from that deer.

For more information regarding CWD in Wisconsin, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search keyword “CWD.”



ELISE BOURNE | THE SUN

## Lundgren Keller Williams ribbon cutting

The Osceola Chamber celebrated Lundgren Keller Williams Realty's new location at 201 3rd Avenue with a ribbon cutting last Friday.

## VIDEO: 'The Airstrip' puts farmer and daughter in the spotlight

FROM PAGE 1

the tires of every piece of equipment on the farm, you would come up with a figure over 5,000.

While no actual emergency landings have ever taken place there, the airstrip is a haven for other area pilots like David. It requires mowing weekly, which takes four hours, though some of the locals that land there help with the task, too.

Filming for “The Airstrip” took 20 hours, spread across two days, which was then whittled down to only 2 minutes and 47 seconds. In the video, you can see David taking off in his plane, Jahnnalee in the basement studio from which she runs her comedy short film company, Why Wait Productions, and, of course, Gizmo, Jahnnalee's beloved Chihuahua and partner in filmmaking.

Jahnnalee's been in show business since age 12, when she began modeling, though lat-

er acting entered the picture. A 2006 graduate of Unity High, she had no luck auditioning for the school plays, but went on to adorn her resume with appearances on networks like Disney XD and the Discovery Channel. Not long after her high school graduation, the airstrip was featured in film for the first time, on an episode of MTV's Web series “Meet or Delete,” where Jahnnalee got to “swap lives” with a girl from New York City.

Jahnnalee then moved to California, where she modeled for Roxy but struggled to break into the acting business as a newbie.

“To get an agent, you have to have an acting reel, but to have an acting reel, you have to have work, but nobody wants to hire you if you don't have an agent,” she said.

Her acting teacher solved this circular dilemma by suggesting she create her own videos to use in a reel. After receiving praise for the comedic shorts she wrote, directed, edited and starred in, she began entering them in film festivals.

Her series “Dating Disasters” won Best Web Series — Audience Choice as well as Best Script and the Grand Jury Prize at the 2014 Hollywood & Vine Film Festival. In 2015, her “military short film” Lost in Time won Best Actress at Hollywood & Vine. She spends part of the year in Los Angeles and part in Balsam Lake. “Why Wait for opportunities when you can create them yourself!” is the tagline behind her company's title.

Gizmo the Chihuahua, meanwhile, was first acquired eight years ago as a puppy. Jahnnalee spent two years searching for the perfect show dog, but it quickly became apparent that this was not the life for Gizmo. He had to be neutered in order to prevent him from developing a tumor due



COURTESY JAHNNALEE RANDALL

John Deere films David and Jahnnalee Randall's father/daughter story on their Balsam Lake farm.

to a testicular anomaly, and show dogs cannot be neutered or spayed.

Shortly afterward, however, Jahnnalee received a call from a director she'd worked with in Los Angeles. The dog that was slated to star in a commercial for the city's tourism efforts had dropped out and that dog looked just like Gizmo, and rode everywhere in a purse like him, too.

“[Gizmo] nailed it. The camera was on, he was smiling away... and after that, we just kept getting referrals for more stuff, and then he became a working actor and he paid my bills in Los Angeles,” Jahnnalee said.

Jahnnalee found out about the John Deere series through an online casting call, much like “Meet or Delete” and many of her other early opportunities. After a few months of interviews, the producers took a liking to the novelty of a farm that boasts both an airstrip and a film studio.

“They don't know anyone else that mows with a John Deere on an airstrip,” Jahnnalee said. “They also don't know someone else that lives on a farm that is a one-person show and crew, and creates comedy short

films.”

The project was almost halted, though, by the devastating storms of July 19. That day, the farm's barn was destroyed. Many trees were uprooted and much of the corn and soybean crops were damaged as well.

“I wasn't sure if John Deere would still want to come out and film, if everything was no longer usable,” Jahnnalee said. “But the airstrip was fine.”

“The Airstrip” can be found on John Deere's Instagram account, under the hashtag #RunWithUs. Much of Jahnnalee's work, and a link to her YouTube channel, can be found on [whywaitproductions.com](http://whywaitproductions.com). In addition to doing all the technical work behind her videos, she plays all the characters, too — except those of the canine variety, which are played by Gizmo.

“[The producers of “The Airstrip”] asked you, ‘How do you feel about what she's doing?’, and you said...” Jahnnalee recalled.

“Just as long as it makes you happy,” David finished.

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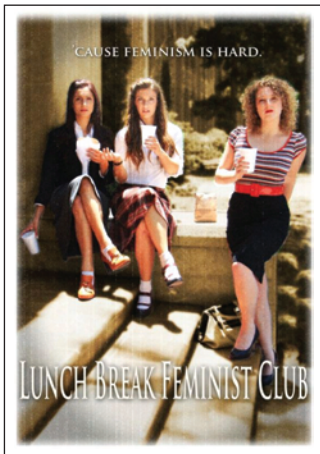
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**AUDIENCE BEST WEB SERIES  
BEST DIRECTING IN WEB SERIES**

**Title:** Lunch Break Feminist Club  
**Genre:** Comedy  
**Project Type:** Web Series  
**Creator(s):** Natasha Halevi, Rebekah Alexander, and Olivia Dudek  
**Logline:** Lunch Break Feminist Club is a web series developed to discuss feminist topics in a quirky and ironic way through the eyes of a haphazard and wildly inappropriate



feminist club.

**Bio:** Lunch Break Feminist Club was co-created by Natasha, Rebekah and Olivia somewhat accidentally as they had an afternoon beer and long discussion trying to define what modern feminism really meant. Realizing, they couldn't agree on a definition, they decided to explore the topic together, thus LBFC was born. The team is also grateful for the improvisational contributions of guest stars Annie Bond and Jessica Lenz. <https://www.facebook.com/LunchBreakFeministClub/>

**BEST TV PILOT**

**Title:** Band Life  
**Project Type:** Sitcom Pilot  
**Creator(s):** Danilo DiJulio (Director/Writer) and Todd Blankenship (Producer/Writer)  
**Logline:** Four bandmates struggle with rent, relationships and staying out of their own way while trying to make it to the top of the charts... starting from the bottom. This is Band Life.

**Bio:** Danilo DiJulio, is an actor, writer, director who has been working in the film industry for 15+ years. His acting credits range from TV's "the Office" and "Parks and Recreation" to award winning films "Smashed" and "Argo."

Danilo has won awards as a writer and actor and now as Director of "Band Life" winner of "Best TV Pilot". Mr. Di Julio has lived an interesting life indeed. He's jumped out of helicopters as a former Special Service Forces soldier, played college football on a team with current Super Bowl winners and NFL Hall of Famers, acted in the above mentioned "Argo" (winner of the Academy Award for Best Picture), and his journey is just beginning. Danilo looks forward to a long and successful career, branching out and growing as a director and writer while continuing his passion job as Dad to his son Daniel and daughter Sofia. Todd Blankenship, a Louisville Kentucky native, is a former Marine and current full time writer. He and Danilo began collaborating three and a half years ago their first project? "Band Life"! Todd is also a father and a former athlete who still coaches wrestling camps. Mr. Blankenship is also a certified scuba diving instructor and enjoys traveling. He and



Danilo plan to finish their heist film next while tightening up their one-hour TV drama. currently resides in Los Angeles and continues writing daily but enjoys time with his son Jameson and his Bull Mastiff "Spiderdog."

**Project Update:** Danilo and Todd currently have ten completed scripts, 6 feature and 4 TV pilots, along with more than a dozen scripts in various stages of development. They are currently in discussions with literary representation. "Band Life" is being pitched to networks.



**BEST ACTING IN SHORT FILM**

**Title:** Lost in Time  
**Genre:** Military Drama  
**Project Type:** Short Film  
**Creator(s):** Jahnna Lee Randall and Gizmo the Chihuahua  
**Logline:** While her fiancé fights overseas, a girl struggles to keep the seams of her world from unraveling at home, while a lost dog helps her embrace the future.  
**Bio:** Originally from Wisconsin, Jahnna Lee Randall moved to California to reach her dreams of working in the entertainment

industry as an actress. While going to audition after audition and being stuck in LA traffic, Jahnna Lee said, "F this," and created her own film company (Why Wait Productions) with her talented dog Gizmo the Chihuahua. Why wait for someone else to create opportunities when you can do it yourself! Jahnna Lee has created web series, short films, comedy sketches, music videos and a handful of technology review videos that have a good amount of views on her YouTube channel.



Her web series 2Fur1 & Dating Disasters has landed her in seven film festivals, winning 10 awards and the 2015 cover of Hollywood & Vine magazine. She is one determined individual and doesn't seem to be slowing down, which has now led her to the creation of Lost in Time. She was inspired to create something dramatic that focused on the people being left behind by their loved ones going off to war. Lost in Time has been accepted into eight film festivals, won four awards, received six nominations and is still in the festival circuit! Jahnna Lee's most recent project is the creation of her sketch comedy web series Pet



Peeves where she plays all the characters along with running camera, writing, directing, producing, sound, and editing. She releases a new video every

Tuesday on her YouTube channel.  
<http://whywaitproductions.com/lostintime>.



“At the end of the day I like to believe the study of art is a collaborative effort and helps bring people together, which to me is very important.”

- Jahnna Lee Randall







MSA's bid for engineering services on major road project approved. See the *Standard Press*.



### New programs for drug-endangered kids

Last week at its statewide conference in Green Bay, the Wisconsin Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (DEC) recognized five newly-developed county programs for their efforts to respond to the needs of drug endangered children. Children living in residences where illegal drugs are manufactured, possessed, distributed, or used are at particular risk of abuse and neglect. In Wisconsin, a total of 48 DEC programs have been formed at the county and tribal level. Those recognized at this year's conference include the Polk County Drug Endangered Children Program.

A DEC program is a multi-disciplinary team commonly comprised of members from law enforcement, human services, prosecutors, the medical community, the health department, and probation and parole. Other participants may include schools, treatment centers, non-profit groups, faith-based organizations, and community members. Through the DEC program, organizations within a community or tribe work together to enhance their response to the immediate needs of (Programs cont. pg. 3)

### Another drowning on the St. Croix River

On Tuesday at approximately 3:44 p.m. the Chisago County Sheriff's Office received a report of a possible drowning on the St. Croix River approximately three miles northwest of Nevers Dam. The victim, 20 year-old Rico Marice Davis from rural Chisago County, swam out into the deep portion of the river that was approximately eight feet in depth. The victim started to have trouble staying above the water and efforts to get him to the shallow water by friends were unsuccessful until later, by which point he was already unresponsive. CPR was started by Davis' friends. Almelund First Responders, members of the Chisago County Sheriff's Office, Lakes Region Emergency Medical Service and Life Link Helicopter responded to the scene. Upon advice from medical control, life-saving efforts were terminated at approximately 4:42 p.m. The Midwest Medical Examiner's Office took custody of the victim and will further investigate the apparent drowning.

### Small town girl makes splash in movie industry

Jahnna Lee Randall, former Balsam Lake resident now residing in California, is making a splash in the movie industry. The model, actress, and now-filmmaker head of Why Wait Productions ([www.whywaitproductions.com](http://www.whywaitproductions.com)) is attempting to fund a short film called *Lost in Time*, a military drama and very different from her previous forays into comedy. "All of my projects have been comedy based and I finally wanted to create a drama to show my filmmaking range," Randall says. "Lost in Time is a military drama short film about the battles that happen at home when their loved ones go off to war." She said that the movie was influenced and inspired by her experience waiting for her brothers to come home from Iraq in 2003-2005. Funds for the film are currently being raised at <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/lost-in-time-military-short-film#/story>. Her work can also be seen on Youtube at <http://www.YouTube.com/JahnnaRandall>.



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> "He is going to get us in the end."

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- Driver injured, airlifted

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# Board ethics called into question

By Lynda Berg Olds

The subject that consumed the most time at Monday night's regular meeting of the Balsam Lake Village Board had to do with the granting of liquor licenses - and how trustees go about it.

Dave Robinson, the owner of Captains Bar, was present and expressed disappointment for board procedure, and what he believed was preferential treatment given to the Paradise Landing business, which has been closed for over six months.

There is considerable amount of background that goes along with this story, but most recently, Robinson's application for a regular license (as opposed to the \$10,000 reserve license he holds) was tabled at the July meeting to this August meeting.

In the meantime, the defunct Paradise Landing, who had

failed to renew their license in a timely manner, requested a special meeting at the third hour, on June 28, two days before the liquor license for their closed business was due to expire. The board granted the special meeting, which was held July 23, and subsequently granted their renewal request in a five-minute meeting, with little or no discussion (and no regard for the pending, tabled license application for the open Captain's Bar and Grill).

Village President Geno D'Agostino broached the tabled agenda item: "Next is the tabled original alcohol beverage license for Captain's Bar and Grill. At this time there is no license available."

Robinson asked to be recognized, and was allowed to speak.

"Obviously I was in error when

I thought that the motion was tabled at the last July meeting, which is why I specifically queried the board and I thought I was assured by the village president that no action was to be taken by the board (until this meeting). So what I have to ask about is the process and I did my research."

Robinson then talked about how little discussion there is (among trustees in open session at the board meetings) about any of the expenditures of taxpayer money. He noted he had been to the last four meetings.

"I hear very little discussion, very little insight into what the actual issue is, whether it is buying a backhoe, paving a street or hiring a policeman. I know the committees discuss things, but it isn't disseminated to the board for further discussion. That is just an observation."



Dave Robinson - Photo by Lynda Berg Olds

Robinson then shared some of his research with the board regarding their treatment of liquor licenses over the past several years. He called attention to an application for a Class A liquor license, for which the board sought an opinion from (Board cont. pg. 3)



Members of the Balsam Lake Village Board listened attentively Monday night as MSA's Dave Rasmussen explained the urgency of distressing TIF #5. In fact, they are holding a special meeting Aug. 10 to quickly begin the process. - Photo by Lynda Berg Olds

# Village board must quick-step to distress TIF district

By Lynda Berg Olds

At Monday night's regular meeting of the Balsam Lake Village Board, Trustee Jeff Reed reported on the doings of the Public Works Committee. He said some residents had attended the meeting to voice concerns with regards to poor visibility when entering Main Street at the intersection of Old Courthouse Avenue - when cars are parked on Main Street.

"Part of the request was whether or not we could re-stripe the yellow no-parking areas," stated Reed, who noted the committee was amenable to that and he needed to talk to Darryl (Ince) - but - it was Ince's last day. Reed said they are looking into

regulations regarding extending the yellow lines to increase distance visibility on each side of Old Courthouse Avenue. He noted there were also complaints about speeding on Main Street, which has long been a problem. He noted the police department is making a concerted effort this summer to enforce the 25-mile per hour speed limit on Main Street.

Adding some crosswalks was also discussed at the meeting. Steve Williams, owner of Lakeview Park at 615 State Road 46 North, was also in attendance and requested the village put in a crosswalk from his park to the lake. There used to be one but when the road was redone in

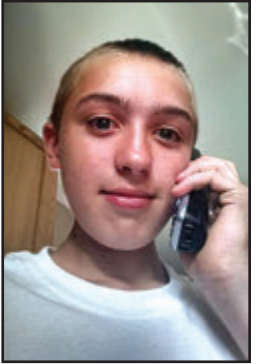
the 1980s the crosswalks were not replaced. Now some hoops need to be jumped through with the county and the state and the committee agreed those steps would be appropriate.

More crosswalk discussion took place and the need was identified for one on Main Street, from Mill Street by the museum. Everybody was also on board with this action and the ball will now start rolling.

Reed also reported on the Smart Growth Committee and made the announcement the village has been accepted into the Connect Communities program. He expressed special appreciation to Polk County Economic (Village cont. pg. 3)

# Elusive youth apprehended

A series of criminal events starting in Eau Claire County Monday evening had law enforcement officials in numerous counties, including Polk County, and two states on high alert. The grueling 15-hour manhunt finally ended on Tuesday morning



Cole Laird in Forest Lake with the arrest of Cole Laird, 14, of Cadott.

Laird's veritable crime spree started Monday afternoon in Eau Claire County where the 14 year-old, gun in hand and a scarf over his face, reportedly stuck up an Amish woman and her daughter doing their evening chores. Police were contacted from a nearby bar and Laird began what would turn into a 15-hour chase throughout Wisconsin and into Minnesota.

Laird was next seen in Woodville where he attempted an armed burglary of a residence while operating a stolen vehicle. Again police were contacted and again Laird fled the scene before they could arrive.

Laird and the stolen vehicle were sighted in New Richmond (Youth cont. pg 3)

# Moving back to defederalized funds

By Lynda Berg Olds

West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC), an economic development partner promoting business and economic development in West Central Wisconsin, has been working hard to reverse the decision to federalize heretofore defederalized loans, as recently reported to the Polk County Board of Supervisors.

The Ledger has kept in touch with WCWRPC Fund Manager Beth Waldhart, who said on July 24, "After further scrutiny of the HUD (Housing and Urban Development) letter, and discussions with the other consolidated funds and DOA (Department of Administration), together we have discovered a possible solution that will allow all funds that were previously

defederalized to become defederalized once again.

HUD seems to have provided a window through which we can retroactively address their concerns. There is a tentative meeting scheduled for July 31st between the three consolidated funds and DOA to hopefully finalize the details that will allow RBF to continue on as it had prior to April 1, 2015."

Waldhart expressed that she was "cautiously optimistic" that this could be accomplished in a relatively short time frame - so as to keep the ball rolling for local revolving funds.

It appears her optimism was not as she reported to the Ledger July 31, "The conference call this morning with DOA was a huge success!"

She said the issue identified (Funds cont. pg. 3)



Polk County's new 2015 Fairest of the Fair court. Pictured, top row (left to right) are: Fairest of the Fair Attendant Julia Owens and Fairest of the Fair Emily Gross. Bottom row: Junior Fairest of the Fair Ella Waterworth and Junior Fairest of the Fair Attendant Imojin Peterson.

- Photo by Ledger staff

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Home » Interviews » 2FUR1 – Acting ain't easy

## 2FUR1 – Acting ain't easy



Interview by Briega McGarrity

2FUR1 is a comedy mockumentary/web series created by spunky actress Jahanna Lee Randall who took matters into her own hands after moving from Wisconsin to Hollywood to pursue her acting dreams. The sketches feature Jahanna and her loyal pooch Gizmo as they navigate the competitive world of acting. Viewers watch them pounding the pavement, attending auditions, dealing with rejection, bitchy staffers and her apathetic talent manager.

Gizmo the talking Chihuahua does the heavy lifting in terms of the humor and has some hilarious one-liners. Ironically Gizmo who would much rather be back on the farm in Wisconsin ends up getting signed instead of Jahanna!

IFQ was delighted to chat briefly with Jahanna about her acting career, dream roles and being the captain of her own ship, Why Wait Productions, where she multi-tasks as writer, producer, director and actor.

**Independent Film Quarterly (IFQ):** What was the catalyst for this mockumentary web series?

Jahanna Lee Randall (JLR): I wanted to create a series about acting and how it's not as easy as it looks. There's so much struggle, rejection, not able to afford food at times and the fact this dream puts you in the spot of a real starving artist. However, so many people have already made a series of going after the Hollywood dream so I needed to come up with a hook that would be different than all the others. Since my long hair Chihuahua, Gizmo, also is a working actor I thought it would be funny if I created a series where a young girl believes she's going to step off the bus in Hollywood and instantly become famous but instead of her getting acting jobs it's her dog that is the one that lands all the auditions!

**IFQ:** Do you enjoy being a writer/director and having control over your own projects?

JLR: Yes! A hundred times yes! I am so happy that in today's generation we are fortunate enough to be able to create our own content! I moved to LA, from a farm in Wisconsin, to become an actress. I was going to audition after audition. Booking things here and there but never really getting roles that made me excel at my craft. So instead of waiting around for that perfect one in a million opportunity I figured it was time to create my own projects, create my own opportunity and pick the roles that I really wanted!

**IFQ:** How did you go about crafting, filming and financing?

JLR: We created an Indiegogo ad and were blessed to raise our goal. There are 11 episodes with the running time of longer than a feature film, which entailed a little bit more money so I took out a loan to finance the rest of the project. I also got a dedicated team together that believed in the project to help me film the series and make the idea a reality! It was extremely important for me to find a team that is as passionate as I am so then everyone is having fun and putting their best foot forward. Because I believe you need a team to create a vision not just one person.

**IFQ:** What are some of the challenges?

JLR: Money... Money is a huge challenge because filmmaking costs a lot. But you just have to become creative enough to figure out other ways of filming that won't cost as much. It's a lot of research, organizing, and budgeting. So it can become stressful at times but as long as you do a lot of work with pre-production things will run smoothly!

**IFQ:** What is the aim with your web series?

JLR: To get my film company Why Wait Productions noticed. We have a lot of different web series, shorts, music videos and feature film scripts. I would love to get my film company known so we can keep creating fun video content! Also to get Gizmo the Chihuahua some big time acting gigs! <http://www.YouTube.com/JahannaRandall>

**IFQ:** The talking dog character is great fun – who provides Gizmo's voice?

JLR: The voice of Gizmo is the talented Ben Bledsoe! I really love the talking dog! Not only because he is my amazing cute adorable pooch but also just because it adds so much more to the story. When I first brought up the idea to friends, strangers and family members so many people told me I shouldn't have Gizmo talk throughout the series. They felt it wouldn't work out that well and people might not like it. I felt that having Jahanna and Gizmo as the two lead characters Gizmo would need to talk or it would become stale and flat. I created a 2fur1 reality series (10 episodes) before the scripted series (11 episodes) and it was a documentary of Gizmo and I trying to live the dream in LA. I would actually record my auditions and his. Also most important I really wanted to showcase the real Hollywood struggles. But the thing I found that didn't work was that we couldn't hear what Gizmo thought about the whole situation. It just kind of seemed like a girl just bringing her dog everywhere. Gizmo did give some awesome funny looks to the camera during his booked acting gigs but I just didn't think it was enough to carry a documentary series. Which is why I figured for the scripted series having Gizmo talk would work so much better and be hilarious since his character doesn't even like acting!

**IFQ:** How is the casting done such as the mean girls and the blunt talent manager?

JLR: I use to work in casting so I always hold casting calls at CAZT and add the breakdowns onto Actors Access. I have a great casting team who comes with me and helps me audition all the actors. As for the talent manager, that is played by the talented John Ennis. I have been a fan of his work since his series on HBO called Mr. Show. I met him at a film festival and chatted to him about how much I enjoy his projects. I then contacted him asking if he would be interested in being apart of my new series! And lucky enough he said yes!!!

**IFQ:** Obviously many struggling LA actors will identify with your series, auditions, rejection, bills and such. What kind of following do you have?

JLR: We have a little following on our YouTube channel! I wish we would have more of a following but so many people don't know that our YouTube Channel Why Wait Productions exists. But we have gotten a lot of great and positive feedback from the people who do watch the series! I figured many actors could identify with the series because of the auditions, struggles, etc. but also I thought people who are interested in getting into acting could also realize how much work it really takes. There's a lot of rejection and also putting your social life on hold. You won't be able to attend all those fabulous parties and fun events like you use to. Becoming an actor and/or filmmaker is a lot of work and a lot of hours you need to put in before even getting noticed. <http://www.YouTube.com/JahannaRandall>

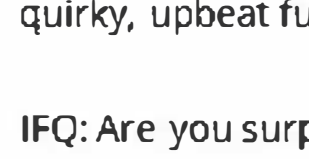
**IFQ:** What acting role would be your dream come true?

JLR: I would like to create a comedy TV series and be one of the main characters. After filming a few web series you become a family with the people you work with because there's a lot of episodes to film so you spend many days, weeks and even months together! I also would like to start filming my comedy feature film that I wrote, which I want to play the lead. She is a bubbly outgoing naïve character who grows throughout the film! I really like the girl next-door, quirky, upbeat fun characters!

**IFQ:** Are you surprised by the awards and generally positive reception the series generates?

JLR: Yes! I'm so happy that we have been winning many awards for 2Fur1! I am so grateful! I just hope we keep getting positive feedback and that more people will tune in to watch! And here's to praying for another season! Fingers crossed!

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## The Jahna Randall Interview (and Gizmo too)

BY BRIAN HUMEK



Jahna and Gizmo reflecting on another tiring day in Hollywood.

*I don't remember exactly how I found Jahna Randall online, but I'm so glad I did. She's an extremely talented actress, writer, director living in Hollywood with her dog Gizmo. Once I found Jahna, I made a point of adding her to my list of important, inspiring and interesting people to interview. She's all three of those things, but the most important thing I took away from her interview is how inspiring Jahna can be. Just reading about how she got one of her shorts onto the Animal Planet Network has inspired me to keep trying and to put an extra effort into all of my endeavors.*

*After reading this interview you'll feel three things: 1) Inspired 2) Informed 3) Entertained*

*Enjoy the Jahna Randall Interview. Oh yes, Gizmo answers a few questions too. So really, this is also the Gizmo interview. I think it's his first :) We start here with Gizmo's questions and then move on to Jahna. That's the way Gizmo wanted things to be done, so I complied.*

## The Jahna Randall and Gizmo Interviews

**Gizmo, how are dealing with your new found popularity? How has life changed for you?**

I've been the center of attention even before being in my first commercial at the age of four months. When I walk into the room people will stop what they are doing and come greet me, I really enjoy my life!

**If you weren't in Hollywood acting, what would you be doing?**

Having my own show in Vegas. I love having all eyes on me, so I would need to stay in the business somehow. The industry serves really good food and I love my trailers!



**Does Jahna ever get jealous of your success?**

Jahna is a great mom! When I book acting jobs she is proud no matter what and is always on set making sure I am happy!

**Finally, if you were forced to work with a cat co-star, who would it be?**

Grumpy cat, because I know I could turn that frown upside down with my cuteness! Woof Woof!

Okay, now your questions Jahna:

**When you first thought of moving to Hollywood, what were some good pieces of advice, if any, you received about making the move?**

I actually received a lot of great advice before my big move to the city of dreams! I was blessed enough to be flown out to Los Angeles for a TV show and got to talk to people that worked in the industry. I was a full time model in Minneapolis, MN and when I got picked up on a TV show in NY and then in CA I realized the acting industry was more what I fancied. After the show wrapped in CA I flew back to Minnesota. I pondered the thought of moving to LA and asked my brother and friends if they wanted to move out there with me. Everyone said no. So I moved onto messaging people on MySpace (yes when it use to be cool) that lived in Los Angeles, that I didn't know, to see if they could give me any advice on where to live and what I should do to prepare before the big move. Everyone that messaged back explained to save up at least six months of rent just incase I couldn't find a job. The majority of people said to live either in Venice/Santa Monica area or West Hollywood. After six months of saving money I hopped into my car, packed my whole room with me, typed in West Hollywood into my GPS and I was off to LA not knowing a single person.



**Now, let's go the opposite direction here. Can you share some blissfully stupid advice people in Hollywood have given you since your arrival? Please no names, unless it was really stupid advice.**

Well, I could go with the most obvious advice females receive which is sleep your way to the top but I think I don't need to recap on those unrealistic notions. The main advice I find irritating is when people say you can't do that or you need to be born into the industry to be able to succeed in Hollywood. I also don't agree when people say you can't write, direct, and act in your films. If you're passionate and believe in your projects, I think anything is possible! When someone tells me "no you can't do that" it's not going to make me stop chasing what I really want in life. The only person who can change my mind about being in the entertainment industry is myself.





# NORTHERN Currents

News and views from the Northwest Wisconsin community

## Local woman featured on MTV reality show

Part one of two airs  
Aug. 23

by Tammi Milberg

**BALSAM LAKE**—The quiet town of Balsam Lake has been a cozy place for Jahna Randall, 21, to grow up. Her family consists of her parents, Sandy and David, and two older brothers, Jason and Justin. Jahna, the baby of the family said she enjoyed growing up on the family farm and spending time at the cabin on Blake Lake.

She is a Unity graduate and since leaving the halls of UHS she has been busy in the Twin Cities working as a model, fashion show coordinator, commercial actor and recently a promotional manager for a band.

The day she was interviewed by the Leader, she was working on a music video shoot in the cities. Randall is constantly on the go. She saw an Internet posting for casting on an MTV reality show and thought her chances were one in a million. After some people she talked to told her she wouldn't make it if she applied anyway, she decided to prove them wrong and apply. Randall's strong will paid off.

She was asked in the application about her hobbies, where she lived, etc., and received a call from MTV the next day. The



Mike Leonard from New Jersey is one of the MTV camera men for the MTV reality show "Meet or Delete." Leonard is pictured with Jahna Randall, Balsam Lake, who was selected to switch places with Dana Sky of Queens. They are taking a train to Sky's home.

reality show Randall was applying to be cast in was "Meet or Delete," a show about two people switching lives.

Randall said it was crazy and she was blown away that they considered her just from phone interviews and photos and that they never met her in person.

The show works like this, a girl cast from Queens, N.Y., named Dana Sky decides who she wants to meet with and spends a week in their shoes, while the person she chooses spends a week in Sky's shoes.

Jahna Randall from Wisconsin was one of three choices Sky could meet. There was a girl from California and one from Texas as well. Sky apparently had already been to California and said also that Randall's MySpace page had a lot of patriotic symbols on it because her two brothers served in the military in Iraq. Sky's brother also served in the military and she is also very patriotic, which may have been one of the leading reasons Sky picked Randall to meet and trade places with.

"I was so excited," said Randall. "I couldn't believe a New York girl would

want to trade lives with a girl that lives on a farm in Wisconsin."

The similarities between Randall and Sky, beyond the military and patriotic connection were uncanny. Both worked in the entertainment industry. Sky is a singer in her father's band and is also a hip-hop dancer and Randall is in commercials and modeling. Both women are 21, both have mothers named Sandy, and it gets even stranger.

"When I went to her house and walked in her bedroom it was almost like walking into my room," said Randall. "We had the same bed spread, and leopard print designs, it was crazy. We wore the same size clothes."

MTV came out to Randall's house and filmed her life before the switch took place. The show will be in two segments, part one being about both girls and their lives and how Randall was picked which airs Aug. 23 on MTV and MTVU at 11 p.m. Central Time. Randall is having a premier party at MacDaddy's in Somerset where the show will be aired on big screens.

The second episode or second part airs closer to winter, Randall said likely December, in which the actual switch will be aired.

Sky got to live the rural life, work on the farm in Balsam Lake, and visit the cabin on Blake Lake. Sky also got to learn to drive tractor, ride on a four-wheeler, fly in a plane with Randall's mother who is a pilot, and do the modeling and promotional gigs Randall's job entails.

Randall said while living her Queens, N.Y., life, she had to take a taxi for the first time. The taxi driver took Randall to Dana Sky's apartment. "Dang, the people in New York drive crazy," she said. "I thought I was going to get into an accident. I got out and the taxi driver drove away and I had to run after him because he still had some of my bags."

Randall had to go to Manhattan and take some hip-hop dance lessons in order to do Sky's job. She went to a model audition on her second day at New York Model Management, one of the top modeling agencies in New York.

Randall did not appreciate the cameras in her face when she woke up in the mornings, or not being allowed to have a cell phone to call anyone. She said she did find other people with cell phones and used theirs when the camera wasn't following her.

She went from Sky's apartment to Sky's parents. There she had to rehearse with Sky's dad to perform in the band that evening.

"I had to sing one song and it went OK, but it was freaky," she said. "I went to another bar and performed with another band and danced with them and it was fun. The bars in New York don't close until 4 in the morning. I couldn't believe it."

On the third day in New York, Randall went to Times Square and said there were many buildings and people to see. She let a man carrying a large snake put it around her neck.

"I was in New York and figured I had to do something insane," she said.

On the fourth day Randall saw the

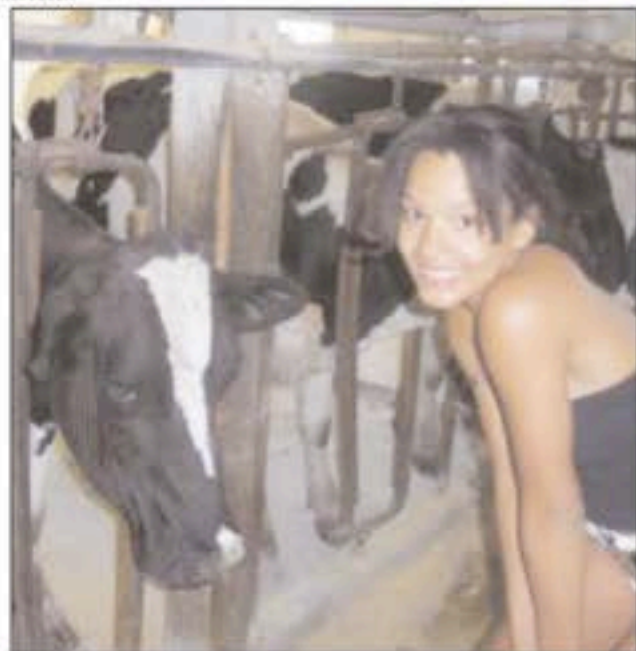
MTV reality show, page 2



This clothing store owner in Queens helps get Jahna Randall geared up New York style. She said what she brought to wear did not fit in with New York style, and MTV was glad to pick up the wardrobe tab.



Dana Sky, New York, is four-wheeling in Balsam Lake with Justin Randall, Jahna Randall's brother.



Dana Sky gets a different look at life while on the Randall farm in Balsam Lake. Sky is from Queens, N.Y., and switched places with Jahna Randall for one week in an MTV upcoming special. Sky did not know that cows actually mooed.

# MTV reality show from page 1

"naked cowboy," a man who wears white tight underwear and a cowboy hat and sings. "I like country, and he sang a song and used my name in it," she said. "I felt more at home when I saw him."

She said being a country music fan, she was not used to the hip-hop and rap that Sky's friends listened to. She went shopping to get New York geared up and MTV paid for all the clothes, meals and expenses of this trip. They picked out clothes for her to wear.

"One outfit was a black T-shirt, just a long T-shirt and they put a belt around it and made me wear it like a dress," she said. "It was crazy, but everyone wears that out there."

After shopping, Randall was taken to Ground Zero because the staff at MTV knew she was patriotic. She said she supports the troops 100 percent and she was glad she got to see Ground Zero.

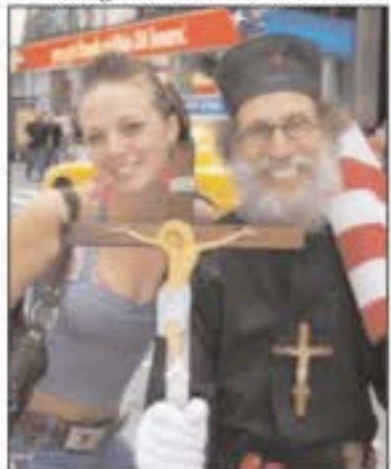
That night she went to an exclusive



Jahna Randall is pictured with the parents of Dana Sky who became Jahna's parents for the week. — Photos courtesy of Jahna Randall



Dana Sky not only did the recreational activities of Jahna Randall during the week switch, but also had to do her job. Sky is pictured here at Randall's job which includes, modeling, hosting fashion shows, acting in commercials and a promotional manager for a band.



Jahna Randall said she had no idea who this person was, but that there are many street people in New York that dress up and pose for pictures with tourists.

club in New York where she said there must have been 5,000 people inside. The VIP room she was in cost \$1,500 for people to get in. They gave her the star treatment and when she walked in, they shined the spotlight on her like she was a celebrity and everyone was trying to find out who she was.

"The people in the celebrity lounge thought I was famous and I could hear people saying, 'I think I know her or I saw her on TV,'" said Randall.

The manager told Randall Kevin Federline was in the room and she thought it was weird that more people were paying

attention to her and her table than they were to him. On the way out of the club, she got to take the "celebrity escape" or back way out of the club.

"I would never have thought I would ever be able to use a back way that only celebrities use to leave a club. What a fun night I will remember for the rest of my life," she said.

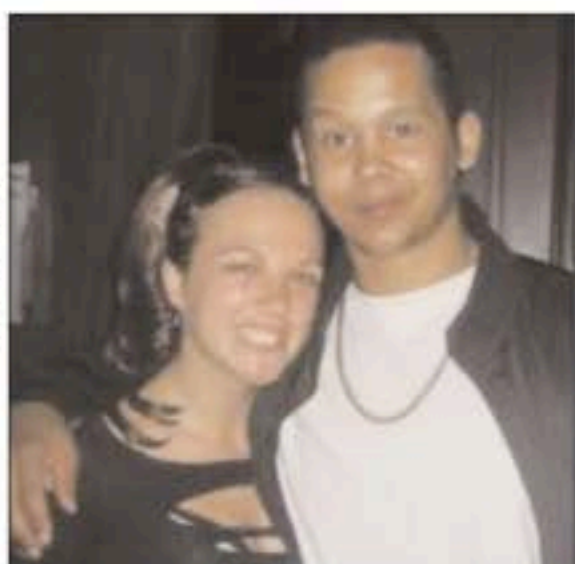
On the fifth and final day, she went shopping some more and when she got to Minneapolis at the airport she was picked up by some familiar faces, her dad, David, and her best friend, Jena. They took her to MacDaddy's in Somer-

set where she met up with some of her other friends and shared her photos and stories.

"It was odd to walk around with cameras following me 24/7," Randall said reflecting on the experience. "After a day or two I got used to it and felt like they weren't even there. Every day we had to do one-on-one interviews and talk into the cameras. They asked questions about the day and personal questions. I'm not really sure what they will be using, so I will just have to watch the show and find out."



Dana Sky, 21, learns to drive a John Deere tractor with David Randall during her week of switching places with Balsam Lake native Jahna Randall for a reality show to be aired on MTV next week.



Jahna Randall poses with her brother for a week, Dana Sky's brother Brian, while staying in Queens, N.Y., for a reality show for MTV.



Jahna Randall said she was surprised to be treated like a celebrity in the New York nightclubs, which don't close until 4 a.m., another surprise, she said. She is pictured with some of Dana Sky's friends in a bar in Queens, N.Y.



Dana Sky got to fly with Jahna Randall's mother, Sandy, from their cabin on Blake Lake.