

## Business

## NEWS TIPS

Call Rob Clark at (989) 894-9642  
or send e-mail to: rclark@bc-times.com

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

The Weather Today is \_\_\_\_\_

In the news today \_\_\_\_\_

Topic I am excited about \_\_\_\_\_

I am excited about \_\_\_\_\_

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## Recording Life's Journey

By **KRISTINA RIGGLE**  
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

All diarists are not the same. An injured person will record treatments, medications, and therapy milestones. A wine snob will scribble about bouquet, price and vintage. A college kid might muse about parties, hot dates, or even exams.

Since 1997, Bay City-based Journals Unlimited Inc. has been filling a need for journals tailored to specific interests, and with more than 500,000 journals sold last year, it's clear that there are plenty of people interested in writing.

"Journaling is very popular right now," said Toni Shawl, owner of Hen in the Holly, 110 Third St., in downtown Bay City. "... Even young people are journaling."

Shawl's store was one of the first retail outlets to sell the "Write It Down" series of journals produced by Journals Unlimited. She said the most popular titles at her store are "Me: A Personal Journal" and the camping and birdwatching journals.

Journals Unlimited has dozens of different titles, and the spiral-bound books are sold all over North America by a force of more than 100 salespeople, according to Barb Morina, company owner and president.

Morina said she got the idea for her company while on vacation in Saugatuck in 1997. A lifelong diarist, Morina was looking for a travel journal with specific spaces for recording information like "places visited" and "people met." She could find no such thing.

"When I started I was probably the only person I knew of that did fill-in-the-blank journals," said Morina. "Now there are a lot of people who are doing theme journals, but I think what sets me apart is the variety of titles to choose from."

Working out of her home, Morina's first journals had the themes of "Vacation," "Camping," "Golfing" and "Boating." She printed 10,000 copies.

"Putting up that first bit of money to publish those first four books was a big deal," said Morina. "A lot of people ask me if I imagined it would turn into what it is today and I say, 'yes.' I wouldn't have done it if I didn't have big dreams. I saw great potential."

The early books sold well, and Journals Unlimited began to grow, eventually landing in a 1,200-square-foot building on Two Mile



**Book smarts:** Barb Morina, president of Journals Unlimited Inc., shows off many varieties of the company's product. The writing journals are created in Bay City and printed in Indiana.

Road in Bangor Township.

Morina said ideas for journal titles began coming from her staff and customers. The teacher's journal, for example, was created by request.

### JOURNALS BY THE NUMBERS

**12**

Number of employees at Journals Unlimited.

**100**

Number of salespeople selling the company's journals throughout the United States.

**3,400**

Square feet in the company's headquarters on Euclid Avenue.

**500,000**

The approximate number of journals sold last year.

**10,000**

Number of journals printed in the very first printing.

**50**

Number of different large journal titles available.

**16**

Number of different small journal titles available.

**200**

Number of pages in a journal.

**100**

Percentage of journals printed in the United States.

**\$19.95**

Suggested retail price for large-format journals.

**\$4.95**

Suggested retail price for pocket-size journals.

Last October, with 50 different titles – the newest of which is "Campus Life" – and annual sales reaching the half-million mark, Journals Unlimited outgrew its headquarters once again and moved to a new 3,400-square-foot building at 1213 S. Euclid Ave. in Bay City.

"We basically started the business in our home, then moved as we grew. We just keep outgrowing," Morina said.

The design work and business operations take place at the headquarters and the journals themselves are printed in Indiana and shipped back to a local warehouse.

Morina's business partner, John Morina, runs the warehouse.

The new location is set up to handle the printing of small custom orders, a side of the business that has picked up pace in the last year.

Shelly Walczak, Morina's sister, heads up the custom end of the business. She said custom orders have included a wine journal for Ralph Lauren, and a garden journal for "O" Magazine.

All of the journals are undated, so diarists can write as often or seldom as they like. Each page has "prompts" specific to the title. For example, "Mom: A Mother's Journal", includes prompts like, "I am excited about ..." and "Today for the first time you ..."

"Some people have good intentions but just don't know where to start. These are fun little questions to help people get started," Morina said.



**Wide selection:** The journals are spiral bound and come in two sizes. There are 50 titles available in the large journals and 16 titles in the pocket journals.



**Latest title:** The most recently released themed journal is titled 'Campus Life: My College Journal.'