



# Capital Electric

COOPERATIVE

## OCTOBER 2024

Chanda Stelter's recent literary work, "Guitar Ghost," tells a story of love and commitment set in Alabama in the 1960s. Chanda's inspiration for the book originated from an unlikely source. Chanda and her family have been Capital Electric Cooperative members for many years.



## IN THIS ISSUE

- "Guitar Ghost" first in series of novels
- New shoes for local students
- Kyle Volk joins line crew
- Lincoln celebration represents community pride
- Board minutes

# Chanda Stelter

## North Dakota Author



# Guitar Ghost

*Seasons change, does love?*

*By: Chanda Stelter*

**Chanda Stelter is a devoted wife of over 25 years and a loving mother of two adult children. Originally from a small rural, farming town in North Dakota, she grew up as a country girl. She was a stay-at-home mom and later went back to school to become a teacher. She never intended to become a writer; however, an unexpected twist in her plans would change her life's journey.**

## Dream becomes reality for co-op member

BY WES ENGBRECHT

**W**hile you sleep, a dream provides you with memorable thoughts, images and ideas that may impact you for a long time. Forgettable dreams are usually difficult to explain, since they may include confusing details, while others are specific and true to life and have a lasting effect on you.

Chanda Stelter's inspiration to write a novel started while she was sleeping. Recovering from pneumonia, Stelter spent many hours resting to recover. During one long night of fitful sleep, Stelter awoke with a vivid image that would unfold into something incredible. This dream was more of a premonition and included

the title and subject matter of a book she would begin to write. The interesting part of this story is she was not inclined to take on a writing at all, much less than one of this magnitude.

Born and raised on a farm near Grenora in northwestern North Dakota, Stelter had opportunities to cultivate her imagination. Her mother, Betty, was a high school English teacher, so putting pen to paper in a meaningful way would seem natural. Raising two children with her husband, Shawn, and holding down a full-time teaching job took precedence over almost everything else.

"I'm just a good ol' country girl. I didn't aspire to become a writer, but when the idea presented itself in my dream, I couldn't deny this internal nudge that I felt," she says. With an optimistic attitude, Chanda moved forward, but not without hesitation. Despite her doubts, she stole time away to work on her book with a thrilling sensation to accomplish what she had started.

The book she dreamed of writing, and eventually completed, is titled "Guitar Ghost." It is a Christian-based, historical romance novel set in Alabama in the 1960s.

"I even dreamed of the southern setting for my book. After some necessary research, I was able to write it from that perspective, even though I have never lived there. I also worked characters into my book that mimicked real people in my life, which added a personal flair much appreciated by them," she says.

The meaning behind the title, "Guitar Ghost," is deliberately revealed later in the book, and Chanda is adamant about keeping it a secret. If you want to find out the title's meaning, she is quite clear on this fact:

"You need to read the book for yourself to discover the meaning."

"It will be worth the wait!" she adds with a smile.

During the writing process, many people helped encourage and support her. There were times during the seven-year process when Chanda felt some doubt, but her circle of supporters kept her focused on her goal. Her dad, who has since passed away, had the opportunity to read it and share some ideas that became vitally important to the final product.

"When your father reads the book and tells you that you did it all wrong, you pay attention," she says. The book was dedicated to her father.

The book was ready for sale in November 2023. Amazon, the Rainbow Shop and Barnes & Noble grabbed the opportunity to place it on their shelves.

"It was actually surreal when that time came, as it represented the culmination of an unexpected dream," Chanda recalls.

"Guitar Ghost" is the first in a series of novels. The storylines for each book are already planned and the cover artwork is complete. Chanda is ready to keep rolling as she continues to share the story.

Capital Electric Cooperative members for 23 years, Chanda and Shawn have raised their children, Faith and Samuel, northeast of Bismarck. Chanda is a teacher at Martin Luther School and Shawn is a technology system innovator with Bismarck Public Schools.

Throughout the years, I have met many Capital Electric members who have expressed their talents through hard work and creativity. Chanda is an example of this type of person as she represents a true North Dakota success story. ☺

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL  
**C O O P**  
**M O N T H**

**Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit, community-led utilities. Because we are a co-op, we can adapt to our local members' needs, providing the programs and services you care about most.**  
*That's the power of co-op membership.*



Capital Electric Cooperative's **Wes Engbrecht** was involved in this project, while **Jeanne Dekrey**, left, and **Nita Jeromchek**, right, did a huge amount of planning so it would be successful.

## Shoes of Hope helps students start school on the right foot



"It feels great to help others when you have the opportunity" is what you hear most from people volunteering their time to make a difference. Each life you can touch in a positive way is meaningful and provides an example to others.

One of Bismarck's newer volunteer programs, Shoes of Hope, was introduced to Bismarck by a Capital Electric Cooperative member, Legacy United Method Church. As a church member, Nita Jeromchek became familiar with the program during her time in Florida. Jeromchek leads the project in Bismarck, which supports up to 160 children each year.

"With school coming, there is a lot of anxiety for the students and the parents, and this event relieves some stress resulting from back-to-school costs," Jeromchek explains. "We have been including students from kindergarten through eighth grade."

The program has been offered in the area for six



**Andrew Delzer** (fourth from right) and his family provided new and slightly used clothing for each student.

years and continues to grow. Registered students are treated to new tennis shoes, socks, clothing, haircuts and lunch. The students can also expect to have their feet washed by volunteers at the event.

Clothes for KIN, standing for “kids in need,” was also at the event, and its own volunteers were providing new or slightly used clothing. The organization was started by Andrew Delzer.

“It started in fourth grade, around Christmastime, when my parents said, ‘Hey, let’s look at a way to give Christmas away this year, instead of taking, as we always have done,’” Delzer says.

Shoes of Hope received an Operation Round Up grant from Capital Electric’s charitable trust last year. The funds helped meet the budget to provide shoes to more students. The program continues to increase the number of students served each year.

“When you see the smiles on the faces of these children that come out with brand new shoes, it’s priceless and hard to replace. I’m very privileged to be involved with this program. I will enjoy watching the program grow as we move forward. I’m so impressed by the time Nita and her co-organizer, Jeanne Dekrey, put into the planning of it,” says Wes Engbrecht, Capital Electric communications and PR director.

Thank you, Nita, Jeanne and the rest of the Legacy volunteers who made this event a success. It’s truly a labor of love and appreciated by all! ☺



Volunteer stylists provide haircuts and styling to those who choose to sit for them.



Journeyman Lineworker **Kyle Volk** was recently added to the Capital Electric Cooperative line crew.

## Volk brings diverse background to operations department

Recently joining Capital Electric Cooperative's line crew is journeyman lineworker Kyle Volk. Volk is the latest addition to an already experienced team of lineworkers serving and greatly appreciated by our co-op members.

Volk is working at the Bismarck headquarters. He gained unique experience working as a lineworker for a year with an overhead contractor at an open-pit copper mine in Arizona. Following his Arizona stint, he worked for three years on the line crew for North Central Electric Cooperative in Bottineau.

At age 17, Volk began serving our country as a sapper engineer with the Army National Guard. The duties of a sapper unit typically include bridge-building, laying or clearing minefields, demolitions, field defenses, general construction and building, as well as road and airfield construction and repair. Volk has served 13 years and plans to continue that service.

Volk graduated from Rugby High School in 2012.

He then received an environmental science degree from Dakota College in Bottineau. He completed his education at Minot State University, earning a business management degree, followed by earning his certificate with Bismarck State College's lineworker program.

Volk's Capital Electric career began on June 17, and he has been immersed in training since that time.

Operations Manager Jeff Holzer has welcomed Volk to the department.

"At Capital Electric, we reach for the highest level of member service. Kyle has great lineworker experience and will hit the ground running. He will add qualities – discipline and hard work – gained from his years of military service, as well as his work as a lineworker," Holzer says.

We welcome Kyle to the Capital Electric team and know he will do a great job for you, our members. We also thank him for his service to our country. ☺



© Leslie Livengood Photography

Capital Electric Cooperative employees and board members joined Lincoln's parade fun by handing out candy to the kids

## Lincoln's annual celebration enjoyed by all

Providing electric service to the residents and businesses of Lincoln is a privilege Capital Electric Cooperative has enjoyed since the city was founded in 1977. The relationship between the city and the co-op's employees and lineworkers makes it a true partnership as the community's population trends upward quickly.

Lincoln's annual celebration, usually held in August, brings residents of all ages to enjoy the parade, a free lunch of grilled food, games for the kids and an evening party downtown for adults. Capital Electric is pleased to join in the fun.

This year, Energy Services Technician Jared Nygaard and Manager of Communications and IT Wes Engbrecht became involved before the day arrived.

"We were asked to assist in the event planning, as well as looking ahead to future celebrations and other events that will happen throughout the year," Nygaard says.

"Commitment to community is one of the cooperative principles important to all electric cooperatives," Engbrecht adds.

Capital Electric General Manager Paul Fitterer joined

a team of Capital Electric employees and a Capital Electric board member in the parade.

"We are proud to be involved with Lincoln's citywide events and pleased to be working with them on infrastructure development as the city continues to rapidly grow," Fitterer says.

Nygaard and Engbrecht capped off Saturday's parade with a delicious homemade pizza at DJ's Tavern. It was a fitting end to a successful community event in small-town North Dakota.

Mayor Keli Berglund is proud of Lincoln's progress.

"The city of Lincoln recently had an exciting opportunity to annex nearly 500 acres, which nearly doubled the size of our city. In addition, the city is pleased to announce the appointment of Lincoln Police Chief Matthew Giddings. Chief Giddings is committed to increasing community outreach, which is solid servant leadership. Lincoln Days is an event the community enjoys. The event brings the community together and fosters a sense of belonging," Berglund says.

We look forward to Lincoln's progress as we continue to serve the community. ☺

# Board minute excerpts **AUG. 23**

The regular meeting of the board of directors of Capital Electric Cooperative was held on Friday, Aug. 23. The meeting was held at Capital Electric, 7401 Yukon Drive, Bismarck.

All directors were present at that time.

**Also present were:** Manager Paul Fitterer, Business Manager Luke Steen, Operations Manager Jeff Holzer, Engineering Services Manager Greg Owen, Energy Services Manager Josh Schaffner, Manager of Communications and IT Wes Engbrecht, and Attorney Zachary Pelham of Pearce Durick PLLC, who acted as recording secretary.

**Financial Review:** Prior to the board meeting, Directors Deon Vilhauer and Lyndon Anderson reviewed the July check register and expenditures. The financial review was approved as presented.

**Management Reports (Business Department, Operations Department, Engineering Services, Energy Services and Communications/IT):**

**Business Department Report:** Steen presented the July financial and statistical report to the board.

Revenue was ahead of the budgeted amount for July as \$4,370,525 was generated, in comparison with the budgeted figure of \$4,181,302 (favorable variance of \$189,223 or 4.5%).

Capital Electric's July net load factor was ahead of budget by 0.32%.

The operating margin for July was \$-45,111, ahead of the budgeted amount of \$-155,090. The total margin for July was \$-33,145, which was ahead of the budgeted amount of \$-147,468.

Capital Electric began billing 83 new services in July, bringing our active services to 22,421 versus 22,109 at this time last year, or a net increase of 312 accounts over the last 12 months.

The cash flow statement was reviewed.

**Estate Retirements:** Following review of the financial condition of the cooperative and recommendation by management, the retirement of eight member estates totaling \$9,714.01 was approved.

**Operations Report:** Holzer reviewed the written report from the operations department. Holzer reported crews

completed a single-phase to three-phase conversion in the Regan area, continued a line extension to the Summit Point area near Hawktree, and resolved outages at the Horizon 2 substation believed to have been caused by nesting birds.

**Safety Report:** The safety report was reviewed. There were no lost-time accidents since the last board meeting.

**Engineering Services Report:** Owen reviewed the written report from engineering services. Twenty-two work orders were completed in July. Owen reported on ongoing and upcoming projects, including cable replacement at Imperial Valley, completion of numerous service lines and short primary line extensions for new services and potential interest in Capital Electric's tower property.

**Meter Purchase:** Following discussion, the purchase of additional Verizon meters as recommended by staff was approved.

Following discussion, approval was made to enter into an amended meter service contract with Verizon.

**Energy Services:** Schaffner reviewed the energy services report. Fifty service orders were completed in July. Schaffner reported on attending the Basin Electric Power Cooperative annual meeting, provided a facility maintenance update and coordinated a solar interconnection walkthrough for Capital Electric operations and energy services staff with a local solar contractor.

**Communications and IT:** Engbrecht reviewed the communications and IT report. Engbrecht reported on community events attended by Capital Electric and the upcoming Sept. 19 Member Advisory Committee meeting.

**Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC) Grant:** Following discussion, the RDFC grant application of Wilton Rural Ambulance was approved as presented.

**Key Ratio Trend Analysis:** Steen reviewed the Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) key ratio trend analysis.

**Load Forecast:** Steen reviewed the 2025 update of the 2023 load forecast of Capital Electric. Following discussion, a resolution to adopt the load forecast update as presented was approved.

**Budget:** Steen reviewed preliminary

budgets for 2025 and no action was taken.

**Strategic Planning Update:** Fitterer reported an update on the status of achieving the stated goals from the strategic planning session.

**Basin Electric Power Cooperative:** Fitterer reported on Basin Electric matters.

**Central Power Electric Cooperative:** Dave Charles reported on the July board meeting.

**Industry Update:** Fitterer reviewed materials related to power markets and general cooperative news.

**North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC):** Vilhauer reported on NDAREC matters. Discussion occurred regarding the Keep It Local coalition to oppose an initiated measure relating to property taxes.

**CFC Director Election:** Fitterer reported on two candidates running for Capital Electric at-large financial expert director position. Following discussion, a vote was cast for William A. Roberts. ☺

## CAPITAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Deon Vilhauer, Pres. ....	Bismarck
Dave Charles, V. Pres. ....	Bismarck
Kyle Tschosik, Sec.-Treas. ....	Bismarck
Lyndon Anderson, Asst. Sec.-Treas. ....	Baldwin
Greg Dehne .....	Bismarck
Dwight Wrangham.....	Lincoln
Kayla Pulvermacher.....	Lincoln
Sara Vollmer .....	Wing
Bret Weiland.....	Bismarck

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