

# Meet Nikkole Abbas...

This month you can learn about one of our Women’s Networkers who has followed her heart to a fairly unconventional career path. Nikkole Abbas grew up in De Smet, SD – Yes, the home of Laura Ingalls Wilder. Nikkole (“Nikki” back then) played several roles in the Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant, including Reverend Brown’s daughter and – most fun of all – Nellie Olson.

After high school, Nikkole went to USD in Vermillion because it was “far away.” (3 hours compared to the 45-minute drive to Brookings). Quite ironic now, considering that Nikkole has since spent 3 years living

in Southern California and 2-1/2 years in Kyrgyzstan. I know, I know. “Where is that?” Hold on, we’ll get to that.

Nikkole moved to California in 1996, spending the winter season waiting tables in sunny Palm Springs and the summer serving pizza and beer on Catalina Island off the coast of Los Angeles. Then, she got her first “real” job after an inspiration to “work with kids.” Using the Yellow Pages to call youth organization led to a position as a Coordinator for the local Boys & Girls Club. Young, single and childless, Nikkole got paid to go hiking, camping and rock climbing with teens fairly often. (Can you believe this was

because no one else WANTED to do it???)



*Continued*

# The Networker



## Important Notice

The annual directory is almost ready to go to print! If your information isn’t correct online, it WILL NOT be correct in the directory. Log on today to make sure your information is up to date! For more information, contact Jen Blake at [jennifer@jabpublish.com](mailto:jennifer@jabpublish.com)

**Make your reservation for lunch by calling Dodee Hill at 431-1515 or e-mailing her at [reservations@rcwomensnetwork.org](mailto:reservations@rcwomensnetwork.org)**

### Officers, Board & Committee Members

- Ann Henriksen (President).....(w)390-3463
- Shelley Dykstra (President-Elect).....(w)348-3322
- Dianna Fuchs (Secretary).....(w)718-8455
- Bernie Steichen (Treasurer).....(w)342-9470
- Nina Braun (Treasurer-Elect).....(w)342-5630
- Sandra Schwan (Past-President).....209-4744 (w)343-9230

Visit us on the web at [www.rcwomensnetwork.org](http://www.rcwomensnetwork.org)

\* Committee Chairs who are also Voting Members of the Board Edited and Produced by Jennifer Blake, JAB Publishing.

### Hospitality Committee

- Darla Vulcan.....(w)348-7410

### Sunshine Committee

- Jolee Wolf.....jolee@rushmoremortgage.com, (c) 393-7292

### Reservations & Membership Committee

- Brandy Small\*.....(w)343-9230
- Dodee Hill (Reservations).....431-1515
- Bernie Steichen (Reservations).....(w)342-9470

NEXT MEETING

October 8, 11:45 a.m.  
at The Rushmore Plaza Civic Center

GREETERS

Dee Schrier, DJ's Boutique;  
Ranae Wolfe, DJ's Boutique;  
Sharon Martin, Juice Plus; and  
Anna Vandegrift

BUSINESS TABLE

Helen Millar, Signature Homestyles; and  
Ellie Hornyak, JoEll Travel

*Guests are welcome to attend up to two  
meetings as non-members.*

*For reservations, please call 431-1515 or  
e-mail  
reservations@rcwomensnetwork.org by noon  
Friday, October 3.*

NEXT BOARD MEETING

October 15 at noon at The Beanery.

NEXT MEMBERS-ONLY MIXER

October 23

**Click here to e-mail your reservation now!**

Please remember to sign your e-mails, so there is no  
question as to WHO is RSVPing!

## Door Prize Winners

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**November Spotlight:** Dr. Haave

**September 50/50 winner of \$39:** Rosemary Harvey

**Chantelle Emond, Integrity Massage**

\* Half-Hour Massage Gift Certificate (2), won by Dr. Mary Curtis and Gail True

**Bev Drabek, Presidential Information Center**

\* Book — *All the President's Children*, won by Dianna Fuchs

**Sharon Faiman, Forget-Me-Not Floral**

\* Rose Vase, won by Mary Williams

**Linda Rabe and Dianna Fuchs, Rapid City Area Chamber of Commerce**

\* Mixer Pass for Two and Chamber Folio, won by Cheryl Kienzle

**Dr. Mary Roth, Wilson Park Dental**

\* Complimentary Zonta Expo Ticket, won by Sande Lofberg

**Darlene Kremer, Kirk Funeral Home**

\* \$10 Minerva's Gift Certificate, won by Bernie Steichen

**Ellie Hornyak, JoEll Travel & Passport2Giving.com**

\* Mexico Sun, won by Sandra Schwan

**Dr. Haave, Wilson Park Dental**

\* Two Complimentary Oral Examinations, Wilson Park Dental Coffee Mug, Pen, Tooth Brush, Alternative Fuel Coffee House Gift Card, and Lip Balm, won by Nikkole Abbas

**Gail True, First Western Bank**

\* Insulated Beverage Cooler (2), won by Chris Flinginger and Rita Muilenburg

**Raquel Marvin, Great Western Mitsubishi Suzuki**

\* Bag of Great Goodies, won by Rhonda Janis

**Debbie Ellerton, Heartland Dancing**

\* \$25 Gift Certificate, won by Jodi Enderson

**Peggy Schlechter, Tastefully Simple**

\* Chocolatini Drink Mix, won by Barbara Bom

**Sande Lofberg, Aglow International**

\* Half-hour Massage, won by Cheryl Carleton

**Jodi Enderson, Farmer's Insurance**

\* Zonta Expo Ticket, won by Vesta Wells Johnson

\* Home Organizer CD with Digital Child ID, won by Dodee Hill

**Cheryl Kienzle, e-Venture Inc.**

\* Open Cutwork Candle Holder and Jasmine Candle, won by Maureen Hensley

**Marsha Humphreys, Your Eyes Only Optical**

\* Thomas Kinkadee Cleaning Cloth & Lens Cleaner, won by Vicki Urban

**Jolee Wolf, Neighborhood Housing Services of the Black Hills, Inc.**

\* Photo Cube, won by Monae Johnson

**Kathie Pike, Modern Woodmen of America and Tastefully Simple**

\* \$10 Tastefully Simple Gift Certificate (2), won by Deb Hersch and Jen Blake

**Ann Henrichson, Black Hills Faces Magazine**

\* One Year Free Subscription to *Faces*, won by Janet Smith

**Dr. Mary Curtis, Vitality Chiropractic**

\* Comfort Gel Pack, won by Laura Collins

**Laura Collins, The Travelers**

\* Their First CD, "Looking for the Promise", won by Helen Skogas

**Vesta Wells Johnson, CDR & Body Balance**

\* "The Moon is Hiding" CD, won by Shelley Dykstra

**Nikkole Abbas, 7 Gens**

\* One Compact Fluorescent Lightbulb (2), won by Chantelle Emond and Mary K. Roth

**Deb Farrar & Nina Braun, Ketel Thorstenson, LLP**

\* KTL LLP Umbrella, won by Bev Drabek

**Peg Seljeskog**

\* Zonta Expo Ticket & Roses, won by Amy Curtis

# Nikkole Abbas

## Continued

Next, she filled out an application for the Peace Corps and started telling everyone she was “joining the Peace Corps.” Never mind the application hadn’t been approved yet. While waiting for her assignment, many friends and family asked if there was anywhere she WOULDN’T go. “After three years in Southern California, I don’t think I’d like to live someplace cold again,” she told them.

When her letter finally came, she first had to find out where Kyrgyzstan was. She found it on a map nestled between China (E), Kazakhstan (N), Uzbekistan (W) and Tajikistan (S). After that, she discovered that the winter weather in Kyrgyzstan varied between 21-24° F in the lowlands and 7 to -4° F in the mountains. Brrrr. Hesitant to leave the So-Cal sun for this cold, Nikkole got on the Internet to learn more about this country she had never heard of. It only took one look at pictures of the mountains and countryside to fall in love.

Teaching English in a small rural village school high in the mountains, Nikkole’s love for the country, language, culture and people only grew. In fact, she loved it so much she decided to bring back the best souvenir possible – her husband Avtandil. They still speak Kyrgyz language at home between themselves and with their two daughters Mehrezat (5) and Akilah (2), and are planning a trip back to visit in about a year.

The Black Hills, similar to some of the mountains of Kyrgyzstan (though much smaller), beckoned them to Rapid City, which is near a camp Nikkole attended during her childhood summers. Not willing to settle for just “any job,” Nikkole followed her passions once again, leading to work as a Prevention Specialist for Youth & Family Services. The loss of funding for that position (in her 8th month of pregnancy) eventually led her to her current position as a Methamphetamine Prevention Coordinator for MAPP-SD (the Meth Awareness & Prevention Project), which she has done from her own home office since Mehrezat was but a few months old.

After arriving in Rapid City, Avtandil studied web and graphic design at BHSU. Shortly thereafter, Avtandil started doing freelance work and building this into a web design business, which eventually morphed into 7Gens in 2007. Committed to their personal values, Nikkole and Avtandil want their business to make a difference and want to inspire other businesses to commit to the same. Eventually, Nikkole hopes to be able to leave her current position to join Avtandil as a full-time Green Business and Social Enterprise Consultant, helping to support other socially conscious entrepreneurs in our area.

Nikkole encourages all Women’s Networkers to dream big. Anything is possible.

IN THE BAG — Show off your handbag at the October meeting.

## NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS



DATE CHANGE —

A members-only mixer is scheduled for Thursday, October 23. Stay tuned for details!

AD DEADLINE — Do you want to advertise in the 2008-2009 Women’s Network Directory? Ads are due September 30. Space is going quickly! Contact Shelley Dykstra at 348-3322 to reserve your spot.

FORGOT YOUR PASSWORD? — To get to the online directory, you need a username and password. The username is your first initial and last name (no spaces, all lower case), and the password is your last name (all lower case). You may then register to use the message board, but will have to create a separate user name and password. Confused? Contact Jen Blake at [jennifer@jabpublish.com](mailto:jennifer@jabpublish.com).

AND YOU ARE? — Have you ever recognized someone’s face, but couldn’t remember their name? Networking is a lot easier when we all remember our nametags! If you don’t have one, you can order a Women’s Network nametag for \$10. Contact Dianna Fuchs at 718-8455 for details.

DO YOU HAVE A RESERVATION? — Those who show up without reservations can expect to pay an additional \$5 fee. Please make your reservation in a timely matter.

COMING DUE — In November all quarterly and semi-annual meeting plans expire. Quarterly meeting plans cost \$35, semi-annual plans \$70, and annual plans will be \$135. Annual meeting plans are only available in May. Contact Bernie Steichen at 342-9470 or [bsteichen@4Front.biz](mailto:bsteichen@4Front.biz) for more information.

TIME LIMIT — Please keep your networking to 30 seconds so everyone may have a chance. If you choose to network for a friend or a community event, you still only have 30 seconds for this information and to network your business. Choose what’s important to you, as you may only have enough time to network one item. Please keep in mind that networking longer than 30 seconds may leave a negative impression of your business and actually repel customers instead of attract them. Your help in this matter is greatly appreciated.

PHOTO OP — Did you know you can have a photo of yourself placed in the online directory? Or use the directory to put names with faces. Send your picture to Jen Blake at [jennifer@jabpublish.com](mailto:jennifer@jabpublish.com) Please have the pictures be fairly recent.