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WINTER WEARS FOR THE STYLE WEARY

'Tis the Season of Giving

A holiday gift list for everyone



MAKING A DIFFERENCE: MINNETONKA CITY MANAGER JOHN GUNYOU

DECEMBER 2004

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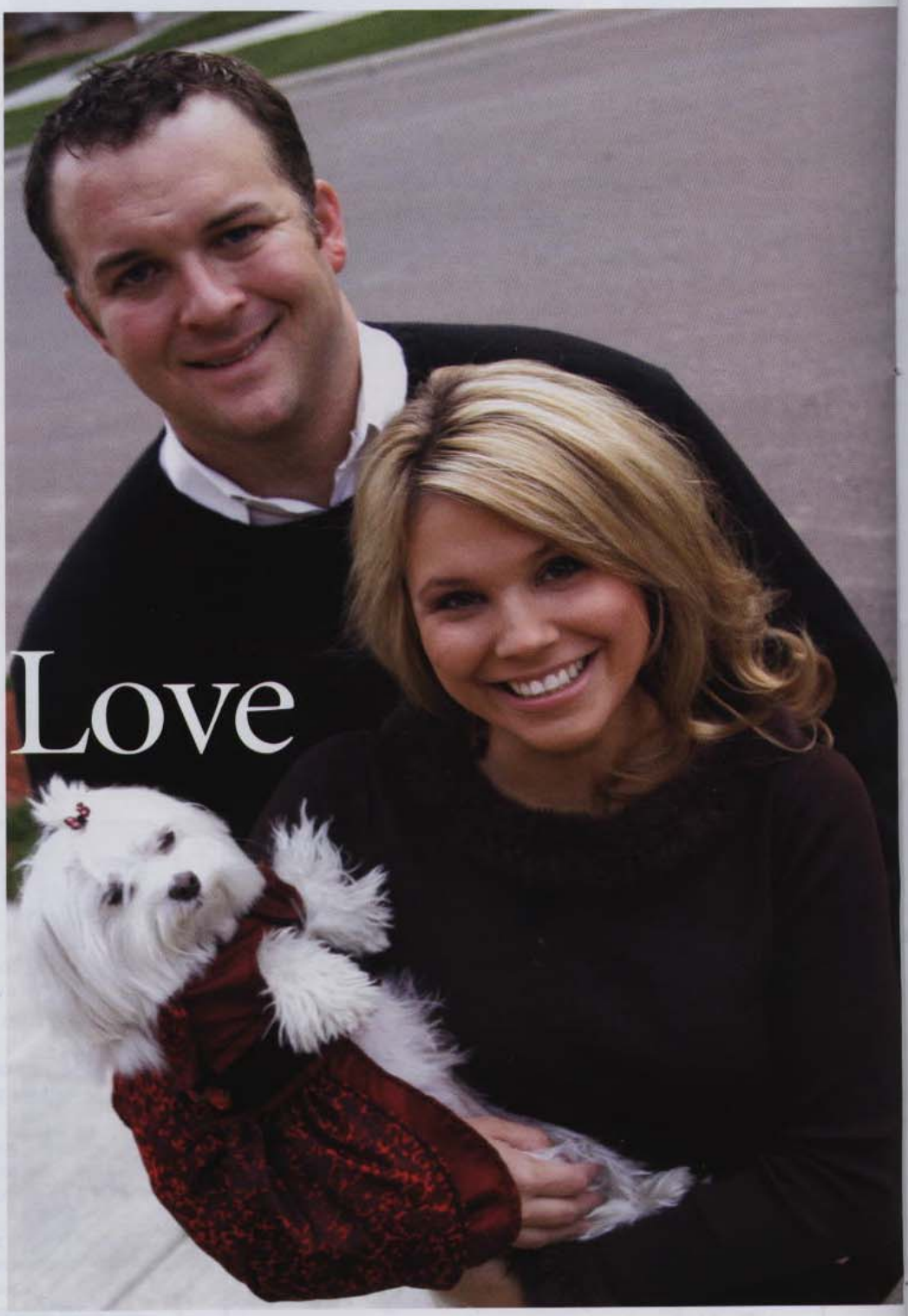
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Puppy Love

Minnetonka resident, Liz Sand, finds inspiration in her pampered pooch

By **Ann Nolin** Photos **Diana Watters**

Living life to the fullest is something everyone dreams of doing. Having a job they love and the ability to spend every extra moment with that one person they can't live without seems like a dream to so many. Minnetonka resident Liz Sand is fulfilling that dream, with one minor exception—that person she can't live without happens to be her 6.5-pound Maltese, LuLu.

Sand credits this white, little fluffball to all of her current inspiration and success, as she well should.

In college, Sand had been a well-traveled student of the University of St. Thomas, had attended Middlesex University in London, England for a semester and had seen the glories of many European cities.

Upon her graduation she packed her bags and headed to Chicago, where she lived for six years, holding a series a marketing positions with companies such as Hammacher Schlemmer, an upscale Sharper Image store, and Digital Work, an Internet company, until finally accepting a position as a marketing manager for Citicorp's Diners Club Charge Card, where she became the youngest manager in her division.

Sand soon decided that she needed a companion. "In all honesty, it was probably my biological clock ticking, but when I saw LuLu, I was smitten," she says. "She's been my baby ever since."

Sand began feeling as though she were lost in a sea of credit cards, and was just spinning her wheels at work. "I knew I was in the wrong business," Sand says. "I not only wanted to spend time with my dog, but I wanted to create something for other animal owners, like me, who would stop at nothing to have the very best food, the cutest clothes for their pet, and items for their home that incorporates their dog breed."

Sand and her mother, Karen, had always wanted to go into business together, and this pleasant little pooch had sparked an idea. With Karen's background in interior

design and Sand's keen sense of style, the pair became an entrepreneurial success with their pet boutique, LuLu & Luigi.

Now, recently married this past October, to Nate Sand, a trader with Piper Jaffray, the former Ms. Howe is enjoying her newfound life in Minnetonka. Her wedding, held outdoors in Santa Fe, N.M., fits the sunshine she creates for those around her.

"The first time I met Liz, I felt like I knew her forever—she has a way of making those around her comfortable, as she is a great conversationalist," Nate says. "From the moment she wakes up to the time she goes to bed, she usually has something to say, and it is almost always accompanied by a smile.

"The first time I met Liz, I felt like I knew her forever—she has a way of making those around her comfortable, as she is a great conversationalist."

–NATE SAND

She always speaks her mind and wears her emotions on her sleeve."

Sand spends her free time practicing her tennis swing at the Williston Fitness Center, or scavenging through the halls of Ridgedale for the perfect pair of shoes. Nate, Liz and LuLu also enjoy dining on the patio at Bacio's and Redstone.

"We definitely love Minnetonka," she says. "It has just been a great community for us to be in." And when the Sand's aren't enjoying their favorite restaurants and shops around the city, they take time to unwind along the many tree-lined paths surrounding their neighborhood with LuLu at their heels.

"You can have the worst day in the world and then you see your pet and you just can't have a bad day, Sand says. "I'm sure that is what kids will be, but at this point, this is what I have."

Children are in Sand's future, just as long as she can find a stroller with a seat for both the babies and LuLu. "They say when you have kids your dog becomes a dog again, rather than a member of your family, but not for me," Sand says.

In the meantime, this energetic entrepreneur plans on trying her hand at golf, and perhaps opening another store. She'd also like to start her own line of dog accessories.

22 steps to a happier, healthier holiday.



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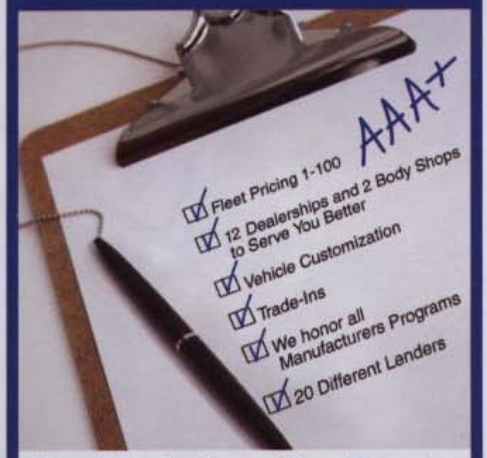
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