

Falling in love with what's local

I am a farmer's daughter who is nearing the point where half of my life will have been spent living in a city. I moved from southwest Minnesota to St. Paul for college, and I worked in the Twin Cities for several years before relocating to Washington, D.C. Now I'm making a home in Baltimore, and my visits to my rural hometown are few and far between.

In mid May, my husband and I were in Minneapolis for his sister's wedding, and I had the chance talk up our new adopted home and urge family members to visit. After living amid - and participating in - the transient social culture prevalent in Washington, D.C., Baltimore is a refreshing switch, where people's roots run deep and strong in their community, as demonstrated by Baltimoreans' hearty school pride, parish involvement and appreciation of the region's role in shaping a once amorphous America.

Despite my own mobile life, or perhaps because of it, commitment to a place is a great virtue in my book, and it is evident as I meet people while on assignment that native Baltimoreans are committed to this city that raised and formed them.

I realize that I am an outsider in a city where most are insiders, and that provides both challenge and opportunity. With this blog - named with a nod to the city's moniker - I intend to share the experiences, people and places that strike me about this new city and the whole of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, which, lucky for this native of the American plains, stretches from the mountains to the shore.

It is my hope that rather than a monologue, "Charmed" can be a place for conversation about the value of place, family and living life as it is meant to be lived. I implore readers to share their knowledge, insights and enthusiasm for all things local in the com boxes as I navigate this fledgling blog's direction.