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« Rugby schools are in a health... Serving others was her life...»

# Prairie Talks: Lecture series in Geographical Center

## Alan Bjerga and Roxana Saberi are first two speakers

April 23, 2012  
By Staff , Pierce County Tribune

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Prairie Talks, a lecture series started by North Dakota native Kristi Rendahl, will host its first event on Sunday, June 3 in Rugby, the Geographical Center of North America.

The series was started to connect common sense people in north-central North Dakota with common sense people from all around the world. Rendahl was born and raised in Benson County, and attended school in Pierce County.

The first speaker will be Minnesota farm native, Alan Bjerga, an American journalist and author. His book, "Endless Appetites: How the Commodities Casino Creates Hunger and Unrest" was published by Bloomberg Press in October 2011. In his talk, Bjerga will share his knowledge and research on agricultural marketing around the world.

Bjerga was the 2010 president of the National Press Club. He covers agricultural policy for Bloomberg News. In 2010-11 he was the president of the North American Agricultural Journalists. Bjerga's talk will take place at the Rugby Eagles Club on Sunday, June 3 at 2 p.m.

The second speaker in the series will be Fargo native, Roxana Saberi, an author, journalist, and former Miss North Dakota. Saberi moved to Iran in 2003 to work as the Iran correspondent for the U.S.-based Feature Story News. She filed reports for organizations such as NPR, BBC, ABC Radio, and Fox News. She was working on a book about Iranian society when she was arrested on January 31 ,2009. Saberi was later sentenced to eight years in prison on a trumped-up charge of espionage. In May 2009, an Iranian court suspended the sentence, and she was released.



Saberi grew up in Fargo, North Dakota, the daughter of Reza Saberi, who was born in Iran, and Akiko Saberi, who is from Japan. She was chosen Miss North Dakota in 1997 and was among the top ten finalists in Miss America 1998. She graduated from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, with degrees in communications and French. Saberi holds her first master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University and her second master's degree in international relations from the University of Cambridge.

Saberi's book, "Between Two Worlds: My Life and Captivity in Iran", was published by Harper Collins in March, 2010. Saberi's talk will take place at the Rugby Eagles Club on Sunday, October 7, at 2 p.m.

The talks are intended to engage, challenge, and inspire conversation. Talks are free of charge, but donations are welcomed to help defray expenses. A limited supply of the speakers' books will be available for purchase and autographs.

Additional information can be found at [www.prairietales.org](http://www.prairietales.org)

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