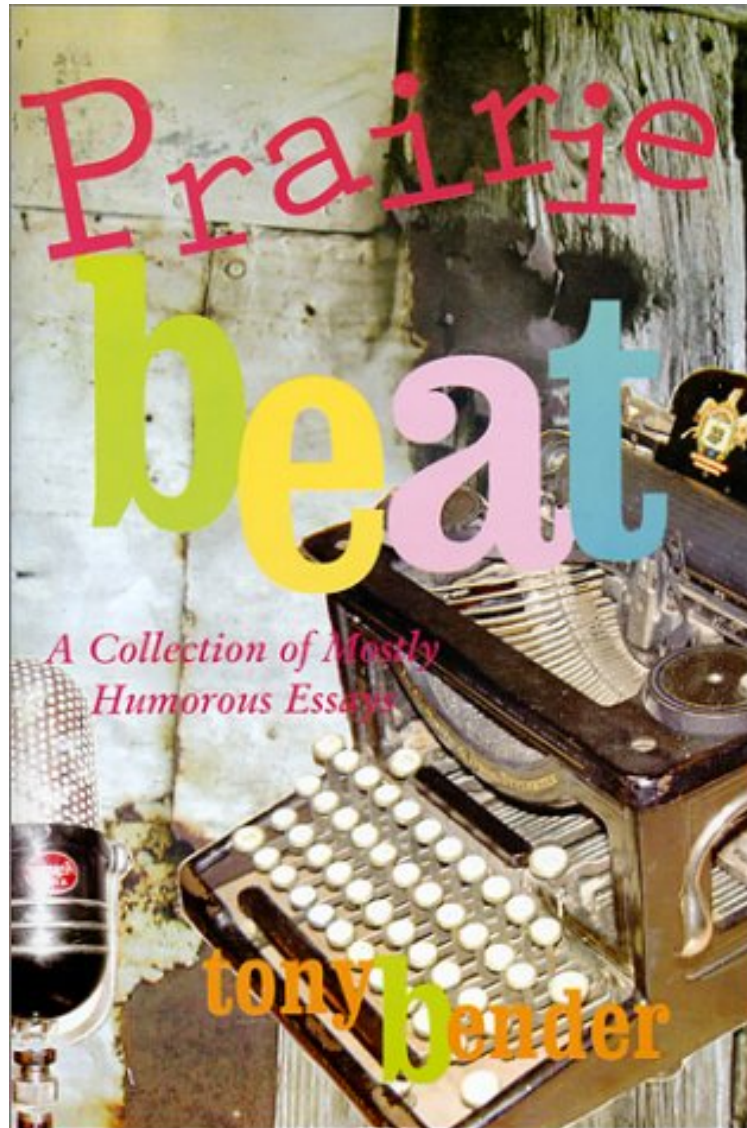


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Tony Bender

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Tony Bender : Prairie Beat before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Prairie Beat:

The funniest collection of essays ever from the two-time National Newspaper Association Best Humor Writer.

If you rupture a kidney laughing, it's your own damn fault. -- Jim Hornbeck, contributor to Chicken Soup for the

Father's Soul Values that matter--that propel communities--get preserved and passed along through Tony's words. -- Kent Brick, ND Living Magazine

About the Author Tony Bender gained national recognition in 2001 when he was awarded a first place prize for humor writing by the National Newspaper Association for his piece entitled, *The Redhead's Tractor*, which is contained in his first collection of writing, *Loons in the Kitchen*. Bender won the award again in 2002 with *Reasonably Functional for a Moron*, a piece included in this book. He earned seven first place newspaper association awards for his column in the '90s. Bender began publishing his weekly syndicated column, "That's Life," in 1991, writing for his hometown paper, the *Brown County News* in Frederick, SD. That very first year, Bender scored a first place award for his column in the South Dakota Newspaper Association's annual contest. Born in 1958 in Ashley, ND, Bender grew up in Frederick, a tiny community on the North Dakota-South Dakota border, 26 miles north of Aberdeen, SD. That community with a population of 400 provided Bender with a "Tom Sawyer existence" that surfaces in his writing as he tells the tales of the characters he grew to love. After a year of journalism at South Dakota State University in Brookings, SD, Bender, in 1977, opted for hands-on experience and embarked on a radio career including stops at KSDN and KKAA in Aberdeen and KQDJ in Jamestown, ND. In 1983, Bender moved to Denver where he worked at KHOW and KIMN. His sense of adventure took him to Juneau, AK in 1986, where he starred at KTKU with his unique morning show featuring alter-egos like obnoxious newsman Irving R. Osgood and the unscrupulous Rev. Billy Joe Jim-Bob. In 1988, Bender was awarded the "Goldie," a top honor from the Alaska Radio and Television Association, for his accomplishments at KTKU. In 1989, Bender accepted a morning drive position at WBPR in Myrtle Beach, SC. Shortly after his arrival, Hurricane Hugo struck. While all other broadcast stations evacuated, Bender and his newsman elected to stay to broadcast to the many listeners who had not been able to evacuate in time. As the only station on the air for hundreds of miles delivering crucial information, the effort was widely applauded by South Carolina officials and citizens. In 1990, Bender returned to North Dakota to be closer to his family, accepting a position as news director at KYYY, Bismarck. In 1991, he took a position as a reporter at the *Williston Daily Herald*. Six months later he was offered the publishership of the floundering *Adams County Record* in Hettinger, ND. Bender sparked a resurgence in the *Adams County Record* leading it to two General Excellence Awards, the highest honor from the North Dakota Newspaper Association. He served as executive news director for the parent company, Dickson Media, until 1997. Bender was presented the first-ever North Dakota Newspaper Association First Amendment Award in 2000. Bender led the *Ashley Tribune* to NDNA Sweepstakes Awards in 2000 and 2001. He is a two-time winner of the North Dakota Heritage Writing Contest. His writing has been published in *North Dakota Outdoors*, The National Newspaper Association's Publishers Auxiliary, *The Journal of Indian Wars* and newspapers in many states. Bender has published two previous collections of his work, *Loons in the Kitchen* (2000) and *The Great and Mighty Da-Da* (2001). His column has an estimated readership of 100,000 each week. Bender and his wife, Julie, have two children, Dylan and India, and reside in rural McIntosh County in North Dakota.