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Sip and Savor at Clear Lake Gardens is a growing event

By ANN SCHWARTZ
Just north of Mille Lacs Lake and the town of Glen on the north shore of Clear Lake, is the late Ed Sletton's charming farm. Dominated by a big red barn and fantastic garden, the farm would easily catch the eye of passers-by all growing season. It is also the place to be for the Fourth of July Parade in Glen. Ed himself donned an Uncle Sam costume, jumped on his tractor and led the Glen July 4 Parade in its early years. Now, the homestead is

repurposed as Clear Lake Gardens, owned and operated by Kelley Rajala and Eric Robinson. Kelley is a Sletton clan descendant and is pleased to give back to the land and to the community.

Clear Lake Gardens is a sustainable farm using organic farming practices to grow a wide variety of vegetables, fruit, herbs, flowers and mushrooms. They sell direct to the public at their onsite farmstand (open through the honor system), as well as wholesale to local restaurants and markets.

Recently they added a "You-Pick" flower garden, crafty



Above: Greenhouses and rows of flowers and vegetables at Clear Lake Gardens, Glen. Below: A great selection can be found at the onsite farmstand.



workshops, meeting rental space and a few farm stay options for a full immersion experience for farm explorers.

Sip and Savor
Clear Lake Gardens fields of flowers and veggies and exquisite, cozy curated farmstand, was the perfect venue for a Sip and Savor event. "The Sip and Savor event recognizes the restaurants who buy from the local farmers," said Rajala as she prepared for the event in mid-August.

Continued on Page 2

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Kelley Rajala, owner of Clear Lake Gardens near Glen by Mille Lacs Lake.

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Thursday, Sept. 19th
MLEC Headquarters
23483 US Hwy 169
Aitkin, MN 56431

Registration & Meal - 12:00-4:30
Open House & Voting - 12:00-4:30
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Sip and Savor at Clear Lake Gardens | Continued from Page 1

"It helps to expand our farm product awareness, both on the wholesale and the retail side." **Sippers and Savors**

Over 100 enthusiastic guests braved the rainy weather to attend the social event of the late summer season at Clear Lake Gardens farm. Despite the downpour, the event, which featured a delightful array of local food, live music, and farm tours, was a resounding success.

The gourmet event showcased a bountiful selection of regional flavors, with a menu highlighting the best of Aitkin County and its surroundings. Guests indulged in a diverse spread, including Block North's Mexican Pork Sliders, The Beanery Cafe's



Sip and Savor event in mid-August at Clear Lake Gardens, Glen, showcased area thriving farms and restaurants. Ann Schwartz photo.

Wild Rice Salad, The Locker Room's Kale Salad, Rustic Trail's Meatball Caprese Skewer, Rosallini's Wild Rice Chicken Pizza, The Joint Tavern's Shishito Peppers,



Haapoja Farm's Sourdough Bread, plus a variety of other offerings like Zucchini Pancakes, Lamb Stuffed Peppers, Veggie and Meat Platters, MN Premium Garlic Tasting, and an Edible Flower Bar.

The dessert table was equally impressive, featuring treats from McGregor Baking Co., including Summer Cookies, Chocolate Rye Cookies, Raspberry Chocolate

Scones, and Carrot Cake Bites.

Attendees quenched their thirst with a selection of beverages, from Garden Infused Water and Lemonade to Summer Garden Punch and Kombucha by Ya-Sure Kombucha, Cuyuna Brewing Co. Root Beer, Block North's Dill Pickle Beer and Wake Boat Seltzer, along with wines from Block North and The Wine Co., were on offer, complemented by craft cocktails.

The event also celebrated the hard work of numerous local farms. Featured producers included Angie's Acres with Wagyu beef,

North Lakes Farm with lamb, Righteous Oaks with brats, Maple Ridge Produce and Buck Hills Farm with fresh produce, Ole Lake Farm with flours and grains, Allicat Farm with produce and flowers, Sorben Honey with local honey, Ferris Family Farm with pork, WillowSedge Farm

with chicken, Clear Lake Gardens with produce and flowers. Despite the weather, the event was marked by high spirits and a sense of community. Guests enjoyed lively music and engaging farm tours, making it a memorable celebration of local produce and culinary talent.



Allicat Farm's Allison Rian champions local good with Aitkin County's Farm-to-Market Hub

Allison Rian of Allicat Farm is at the forefront of Aitkin County's burgeoning farm-to-market movement, managing the Aitkin Farmers Market Food Hub—a vital link between local farms and the community. This hub plays a crucial role in connecting small farms with wholesale, institutional, and retail customers, enhancing access to fresh, local food across the region.

"The Aitkin Farmers Market Food Hub holds a food handler's license and operates as a distributor, allowing us to purchase from local farms and resell to various clients," Rian explained. "Our mission is to get fresh, local produce into area restaurants, schools, hospitals, and other outlets. Each year, our sales through the Hub continue to grow, thanks to robust support from community organizations and

state initiatives."

The Food Hub has garnered backing from key organizations including Aitkin County SHIP, Riverwood Healthcare Center, Aitkin County CARE, Renewing the Countryside, Minnesota Farmers Market Association, and the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture. This support underscores the community's commitment to revitalizing local agriculture and fostering a sustainable food system.

One of the highlights of this initiative is the Sip and Savor event, which showcased businesses that prioritize local food. This annual event offers community members multiple ways to support local agriculture. By shopping at the Farmers Market, buying directly from farmstands, or subscribing to a Market Share for seasonal produce, residents can play an active

role in supporting the farmers who nurture their land and produce.

"A hundred years ago, farming was the backbone of Aitkin County's economy, with families raising livestock, milking cows, and harvesting wild rice and maple syrup," Rian noted. "Today, many families are returning to the land, seeking to provide for their own families while also serving their neighbors. It's inspiring to see a network of vendors, government bodies, nonprofits, farmers, and healthcare organizations working together to bring local food from the farm to our tables."

Rian's efforts at the Food Hub exemplify a growing trend of collaboration and community support, ensuring that the rich agricultural heritage of Aitkin County continues to thrive and nourish its residents.

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- Nisswa Community Center - 25636 Main St, Nisswa
- Ideal Transfer Station - 33503 W Island Lake, Pequot Lakes

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OBITUARIES

JAXON KAHLHAMER



Jaxon Allen Carlson Kahlhamer, infant son of Shawn Allen Blake and Samantha Lyne Carlson Kahlhamer was born and passed away August 20, 2024.

Funeral service will be 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 14, 2024 at Sorensen-Root-Thompson Funeral Home in Aitkin with Pastor Andrew Jergenson officiating.

FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS: Jaxon's family includes his father and mother: Shawn and Saman-

tha's brothers: Matthew, Bryce and Jace; sister Aria; grandparents: Joyce Kahlhamer, Barb Blake and David Carlson; Great-grandmother Marlys Blake; Uncle Scott Blake; Aunts: Jennifer Kahlhamer and Jennifer Klun; many other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his Uncle Dylan Matthew Carlson Kahlhamer and Great-grandfather James Blake.

Arrangements were with the Sorensen-Root-Thompson Funeral Home and Cremation Service of Aitkin. Leave online condolences at www.srtfuneral.com.

ANDREW REHBEIN

Andrew "Andy" Rehbein, 78, of Deerwood died Friday, September 6, 2024 at his home. He was born December 20, 1945.

Services are pending Arrangements are with the Koop Funeral Home of Crosby.

RAMONA BUTLER



Ramona Dolores Butler, 96, of Iron Hub died on Friday, September 6, 2024 at Aitkin Health Services.

Funeral services will be 11:00 a.m. Saturday, September 14, 2024 at the Immanuel Lutheran Church of Iron Hub. Burial will be at the Immanuel Lutheran Cemetery. Visitation will be one hour prior to the service at the church on Saturday.

She was born on July 24, 1928 in Duluth to Gust and Emma (Steinke) Norain. She was united

in marriage to James "Bud" Butler on August 8, 1948 in Aitkin. She was a member of the Immanuel Lutheran Church of Iron Hub.

Ramona is survived by her son, Tom (Tammy) Butler of Aitkin; daughter, Linda (Don) Dzuba of Aitkin; three grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

Preceding Ramona in death are her parents; husband, James "Bud" Butler; and two sisters: Marilyn Lind and Rose Weisman.

Arrangements were with the Koop Funeral Home of Crosby. To leave a message of condolence go to www.koopfuneralhome.com.

HOPE WINDORSKI



Hope Charlene Windorski, 69, died on Sunday, August 4, 2024.

A Celebration of Hope's life will be held from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 21, 2024 at the Walter Scott Erikson American Legion Post in Deerwood. In lieu of flowers, please raise a glass in her honor or consider a donation to a wildlife rehab center or animal shelter.

Born to Vilho and Gladys Torvinen, Hope, made her grand entrance into the world alongside her twin sister, Joy, on April 23, 1955, as part of the bustling Torvinen family of nine. She lived a life filled with laughter, love, and a touch of rebellion. As a young woman, Hope set her sights on the local "bad boy," a man who had once come dangerously close to meeting his maker as a child. She often joked that she fell in love with the boy who almost drowned. Hope was a woman of many titles—mom, homemaker, gardener, friend—but

perhaps the ones that suited her best were beer drinker, Bs'r, and cook. She was known for her sharp wit, infectious humor, and a cooking style that could only be described as "unapologetically hearty." Hope's memory will live on in the stories, laughter, and recipes shared by all who knew her. She was a true original, and the world is a little less colorful without her in it. After 51 years of marriage, Hope passed peacefully in the arms of the love of her life.

She leaves behind her husband, Steve, whose heart she held for over five decades; three children: Travis Windorski (Elisa Lehman) of Aitkin, Tracy Zaske (Al Haman) of Henning, and Taryn Windorski (Nate Melzer) of West Fargo, ND; two grandchildren: Zack Windorski and Harley Windorski; and five sisters: Ruby (Pete) Peterson of Crosby, Joy Torvinen of Deer Creek, Opal (Jeff) Robinson of Marysville, IN, Darla Torvinen of Julesburg, CO and Janie (Paul) Stark of Crosby.

Arrangements were with the Koop Funeral Home of Crosby. To leave a message of condolence go to www.koopfuneralhome.com.

LYLENE HYYTINEN



Lylene Mary Hyytinen, 80, of Aitkin died Tuesday, September 3, 2024 at Golden Horizons in Aitkin.

Funeral service will be at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, September 11, 2024 at Sorensen-Root-Thompson Funeral Home in Aitkin. Visitation will be 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday at the funeral home and will continue one hour prior to the service. Burial will be in the Randall Community Cemetery. She was born August 30, 1944 the daughter of Lyle Turner and Mary Arlene (Cyrus) Worlie. She graduated from St. John's High School in St. Paul. She attended college and earned her degree as a Registered Nurse. Lylene was united in marriage

to Craig Martin Hyytinen. They loved to travel and wintered in Arizona for many years. She enjoyed the outdoors, gardening, quilting and sewing. If someone was in need of help, they could count on Lylene to be there to provide what she could.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

Lylene is survived by her husband Craig Hyytinen of Aitkin;

Children: Deann (Curt) Phillips, Jerry Menge, Kay (Martin) Opatrny, Tammy (John) Hillyard, Denise (Kevin) Copt, Cindy (Brian) Recker; 18 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; 2 brothers and sister-in-law: Al (Deb) Worlie, Jerry Worlie; And many other special nieces, nephews other relatives and friends who mourn her passing.

To leave a message of condolence please go to www.srtfuneral.com

Koop Funeral Home advertisement including address, services, and phone number.

Sunburst Memorials advertisement for Brainerd Monument.

Advertisement for Sorensen-Root-Thompson and McGregor Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

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* Indicates handicap accessible. NOTE: All times are Sunday morning (a.m.) unless indicated otherwise.

- Extensive list of church directories including Alliance, Baptist, Episcopal, Lutheran, and others across various locations.

DNR invites deer hunters to share wildlife observations

As archery deer season opens, today, September 14, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is inviting deer hunters to contribute their wildlife observations through the agency's online log. This initiative aims to deepen the understanding of deer populations and other wildlife species across the state.

Eric Michel, an ungulate research scientist with the Minnesota DNR, emphasized the importance of these observations. "We're asking deer hunters to share their sightings to help broaden our knowledge about deer



and other wildlife species," Michel said. "This is our fourth year using a community science approach, and we're hoping to build on the valuable results from the past few years."

Hunters can log their wildlife observations on the Minnesota DNR website (mndnr.gov/mammals/deer/management/deer-hunter-field-log.html) via mobile devices or desktop computers. The log is designed to capture data on various species, including deer, turkey, bear, and fisher, and will remain open through the end of the year.

Even if no deer are seen during a hunt, hunters are encouraged to submit a report. Recording these instances helps the DNR estimate deer sightings per hour, providing a crucial metric for comparing against deer density models.

This survey was developed following a 2016 recommendation from the Minnesota Office of the Legislative Auditor to enhance deer

population estimates. By comparing hunter-provided data with DNR estimates, the survey helps refine population models and management strategies.

"The data provided by hunters is invaluable in checking our estimates of deer populations and expanding our

knowledge about other animals," Michel added.

The DNR collaborates with the public to set deer population goals for various regions and uses these estimates to guide hunting regulations and achieve targeted population levels. Annual research summaries reporting the re-

sults from these observations will be available online, including data from 2023 and previous years.

For more information and to participate, visit the Minnesota DNR website at mndnr.gov/mammals/deer/management/statistics.html#observe.

CWC invites public feedback on updated recreation ordinance

The Crow Wing County Land Services Department is calling on residents to weigh in on proposed updates to the County's Recreation Ordinance. This is an opportunity for the public to help shape how recreational activities are managed across County lands.

The updated ordinance, available for review at www.crowwing.gov/landservices,

aims to strike a balance between recreational use and the preservation of Crow Wing County's natural resources. Key areas covered by the ordinance include County Parks, Public Water Access, Trails, Camping, Environmental Protections, and Hunting/Trapping, along with guidelines for Violations and Penalties.

The public comment pe-

riod will remain open until October 11, 2024. Residents can submit their feedback via email to landservices@crowwing.gov or by mail to Crow Wing County Land Services, Attn: Recreation Ordinance, 322 Laurel Street, Suite 15, Brainerd, MN 56401. For additional information or questions, contact the Land Services Department at 218-824-1010.

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