

Weed Patch

After 25 Years, Area Gardening Business Stronger Than Ever

BY LINDA WUEBBEN
P&D Correspondent

It's May and any good gardener has a green thumb just itching to dig in some black dirt. It's no different for Sheila Schmidt of Hartington. Gardening and a green thumb are in Sheila Schmidt's blood.

So 25 years ago this spring, with five lovable children zipping around her legs, Schmidt started her gardening business, Sheila's Country Gardens. She started small with one greenhouse, built with the help of her husband, and today her flowering business is flourishing, stronger than ever.

"My husband Kenny still helps whenever he can get away from farming and I miss my kids; they all helped in the greenhouse while growing up but this is still my passion," said Schmidt. "It's just as special this year as when I started 25 years ago." She loves the peace in her greenhouse, listens to the birds singing as they return and never notices the traffic on the highway just 30 ft. away.

Schmidt starts in mid-February with about 20,000 heirloom seeds - more flower seed than vegetable seed. The working environment is great because even though it's 10 degrees outside in February, it will be 60 degrees inside. It was a good season this past winter even with the cold because there were plenty of sunny days to get the seeds going. She starts her day



Linda WUEBBEN

at 6 a.m. and works into the evening.

By mid-March she is filling her planters with some of the seeds she has grown and also with the plugs of flowering plants she purchases. Some flowers do better in planters as plugs and over the years she has learned many tricks to the greenhouse business. Soon the greenhouse is dripping with humidity and as the season progresses, she moves from planting to misting the plants which takes around four hours every day. She prefers to hand mist with a hose and sprayer so she can control the moisture on the individual varieties.

Today Schmidt is pleased to see younger people coming back to greenhouses and learning about growing their own food so they eat healthier. When she was young, everyone gardened. Today, gardeners have container gardens and she sees interest in different vegetables.

"When an older woman comes in to the greenhouse with a grandson and he asks what beets are, I am still amazed," said Schmidt. Her

customers buy differently now also. For instance, they usually only buy one to four tomato plants today instead of several six-packs to fill a garden and can several quarts to feed a family over the winter. She only plants one flat of cauliflower for her customers now where it was a much more popular vegetable in years past.

Today's gardener is also more interested in flowers than vegetables so Schmidt is always trying new things and looking for new textures to plant. She makes use of her new discoveries in the planters and containers she offers for sale. When the customers come in and browse what's available in her new greenhouse, the plants she uses in the containers are often the varieties sold out first.

"People are attracted to visual examples and seeing unusual varieties in an arrangement gets them thinking of new ideas for their own containers," Schmidt said. She also does more custom planters and containers today than ever before as everyone is adding and enjoying pots on their patios.

Schmidt's 50 ft. by 56 ft. greenhouse, which replaced two smaller and older greenhouses, is very easy to walk through and much roomier. Three years ago the couple decided to take the plunge. She said it was either go into debt and build new or get out of the greenhouse business altogether.

The new greenhouse offers other options

for Sheila's Country Gardens and Gift Shop. It is handicapped accessible and also served as a spot to host a craft event with a variety of vendors last December. For Schmidt's first Christmas Open House, she planned for 50 and Kenny directed traffic because 400-500 visitors showed up to check out the vendors. She offered a quick luncheon and bake sale items and sold out of every single thing. For years she has hosted an annual garden party in her back yard but now that has moved to the greenhouse, too. It is an evening event in early September on a Thursday and offers wine, gift shop items and hors d'oeuvres for her customers.

Sheila's Country Gardens, three miles south of Hartington on Highway 57, opened for the season the last weekend of April and the hours are 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1-5 p.m. on Sundays. Schmidt's open house was the first weekend of May and she had some of her daughters join her to help with the start of the seasonal rush. There is also a chance the customers might get treated to popsicles when they drop in - just the right thing to cool off with while checking out the Gerber daisies and a new color of petunias this season. The greenhouses are open through Father's Day but the Gift Shop is open year round.

"I love walking through my greenhouse when all the planters are blooming," said Schmidt. "It's my favorite place."

Yankton Resident Graduates From Leadership Program

"Everyone is a star and deserves the right to shine," was the theme for graduation for Year 22 of South Dakota Partners in Policymaking. The banquet and graduation ceremonies were held in Sioux Falls at the Ramkota Inn on Saturday, April 26, 2014. Over 325 people attended the banquet. Amy Sieh of Yankton successfully completed the 6-month training course in leadership, self-empowerment, and self-advocacy.

The past six months, the 26 members of the Class of 2014 studied about the history of disabilities, inclusive education, presented mock testimony to a panel of South Dakota legislators, learned about meetings, Social Security, employment, assistive technology and inclusive communities.

Keynote speakers for the banquet were Max and Lisa Merchen of Spearfish. Both are graduates of Partners and told the class "to never give up, even when things are getting you down, keep going." Receiving awards were Vikki Day of Highmore, Partner graduate and Mayor of Highmore, and Representative Marc S. Feinstein of Sioux Falls. Day received the RJK Advocacy Award and Feinstein the Legislative Advocacy Award.

Lori Douville from Chamberlain was honored at the banquet with a Star Quilt. Douville is a Year 7 graduate of the training and assists throughout the year on a volunteer basis. She has been involved as an assistance since 2000.

Robert J. Kean, Executive Director of SD Advocacy, who will be retiring June 30, 2014 was recognized for all his contributions and 37 years of service to, for, and with individuals with disabilities throughout South Dakota and their families. The Governing Board of South Dakota Advocacy presented him with a plaque.

Other guests throughout the weekend events included Carmyn Egge of Sioux Falls representing Senator Tim Johnson, representing Representative Kristi Noem was Brad Otten from Rapid City. Also in attendance was Speaker of the House Representative Brian Gosch of Rapid City and Representative Kris Langer from Dell Rapids.

Members of the Class of 2014 include: Leon Adams, Jr,



AMY SIEH OF YANKTON IS PICTURED WITH TIM NEYHART OF PIERRE. NEYHART IS THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR FOR THE PROTECTION & ADVOCACY DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES OF THE STATE-WIDE AGENCY, SOUTH DAKOTA ADVOCACY SERVICES. PETERSEN AND ICKLER RECENTLY COMPLETED THE SIX MONTH NATIONAL LEADERSHIP COURSE, PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING.

Sioux Falls; Diane Baumiller, Parkston; Marnie Boterman and Heidi Sato of Tea; Elizabeth Brown, Clear Lake; Brenda Dean, Jamie Never Misses A Shot, and Katey Peschl of Huron; Jon Ekle, Valerie Gallagher, Angel Maggard and Nancy Schlichenmayer from Pierre; from Aberdeen are Dan Guthmiller, Ryan Pederson, and Becca Wells; Kent Ickler, Rapid City; Katherine Jaeger, Dakota Dunes; Doug Koutz, Holly Lemke and Sue Sutton of Watertown; Tammy Luce, Wolsey; Lindsey Madsen, Harrisburg; Danella Petersen, Box Elder; Amy Sieh, Yankton; and Rhiannon Town of Roslyn.

Partners training analyzes developmental disability issues and builds skills that consumers, parents, and guardians need to effectively obtain the most appropriate state-of-the-art services for themselves and others and participate in decision-making situations.

Partners is Policymaking is a nationwide training now in 38 states and also in the UK, Scotland, New Zealand, Ireland and the Netherlands. National and state speakers who are knowledgeable of disability issues present on current issues affecting people with disabilities, best practices, and the policymaking and legislative processes at the local, state, and federal levels. The overall goal of Partners in Policymaking is to achieve a productive partnership between people

needing and using services and those in a position to make policy and law.

The training program in South Dakota is conducted by SD Advocacy Services (SDAS). Sandy Stocklin Hook of Pierre is the project coordinator for the statewide training course. She noted, "We now have 530 individuals throughout South Dakota who have completed Partners in Policymaking. Their voices are being heard!" Stocklin Hook also commented "We strongly believe that individuals who use services should have a major role in determining what services they are being provided and how they are delivered. It is really exciting to see the Partners' enthusiasm and commitment to improving national, state and local services." Robert Kean, Executive Director of SDAS, noted, "Partners is a training event that is growing in stature and being recognized as one of, if not the premier advocacy effort in the state."

Class speakers for graduation were Adams, Pederson, Luce, Petersen, and Jaeger. They each spoke of their experiences in the training, what they learned, and how they will use the training to advocate for others.

In addition to graduation ceremonies, 157 graduates of prior years of SD Partners in Policymaking spent the weekend in Sioux Falls attending continuing education classes on current issues. "Network-

ing is a very integral part of the entire training initiative. We have made a commitment to gather all graduates with the current class and offer continuing education and networking. Once a Partner graduates from the course, they are not forgotten," commented Stocklin Hook.

Friday evening Partner participants, graduates, and their families enjoyed an evening at Common Grounds. Keith Bundy of Dakota State University in Madison, SD spoke to the group of independence. Though humorous in nature, his message reminded us that everyone is equally important, qualified, and respected. Better Ride, a band from Aberdeen, sang and entertained with karaoke and dancing.

Continuing education classes included: Navigating Health Insurance (Kim Jones-Madison); Consumer Protection (Jody Swanson-Pierre); Self-Defense (Dennis Hook, Pierre); Aqua Zumba (Angie Albionico, Spearfish); Basic Sign Language (Julie Paluch-Pierre); Video Resume (Jack Mortenson, Sioux Falls; Sherri Knipping and Carley & Lori Douville, Chamberlain); Voting (Brian Gosch-Rapid City); Healthy Relationships (South Dakota Advocates for Change); Using Your Creativity (Dan Cleberg-Aberdeen); Smart Phone Applications (Keith Bundy-Madison).

Year Twenty-three of South Dakota Partners in Policymaking will begin in November 2014. For more information on the program, contact Sandy Stocklin Hook, SD Advocacy Services, 221 S. Central Ave., Ste. 38, Pierre, SD 57501 or call 1-800-658-4782. Or you can visit the SDAS Website for Partner information at www.sdadvocacy.com or email hooks@sdadvocacy.com.

Partners is sponsored in South Dakota by grants from the SD Council on Developmental Disabilities, Center for Disabilities at Sanford School of Medicine at USD; Children's Care Hospital and School; and SD Parent Connection. South Dakota Advocacy Services facilitates the training and contributes funding through the Protection & Advocacy Developmental Disabilities Program; Protection & Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Program; and Protection & Advocacy Individual Rights Program.

Meet The Neighbors



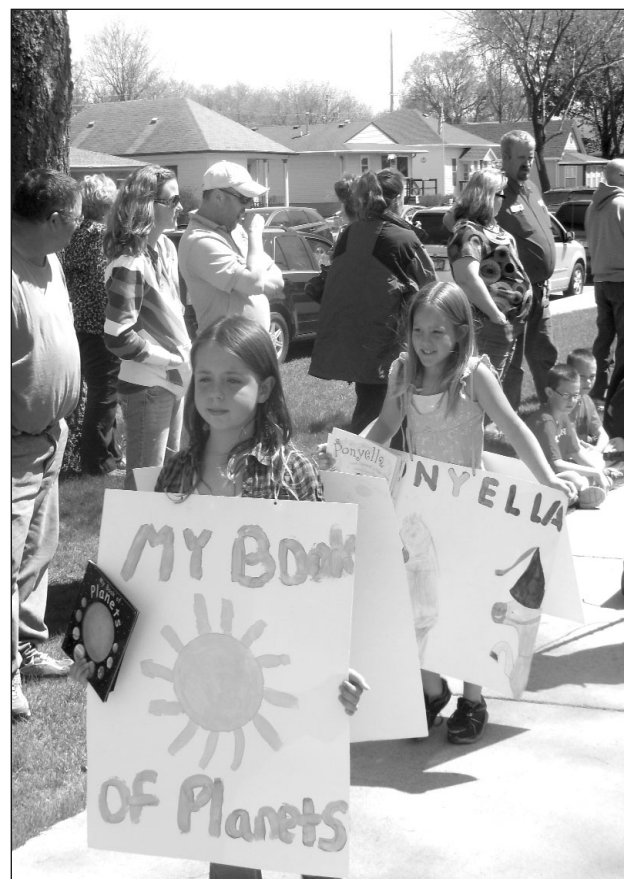
THE ROYAL NEIGHBORS OF AMERICA MEMBERS MET AT WEBSTER SCHOOL FOR "JOIN HANDS" DAY. MRS. SUSAN GOEDEN'S CLASS WAS GIVEN DIRT, SEED AND CUPS TO RAISE THEIR VEGETABLE BEANS. THIRTEEN CHILDREN ENJOYED LEARNING ABOUT GARDENING AND FRESH VEGETABLES TO RAISE AND EAT.

Fighting Hunger



THE YOUTH FROM THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF YANKTON RECENTLY PACKED MORE THAN 6,600 MEALS FOR CHILDREN IN NEED OF OUR CARE. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN, PLEASE VISIT [WWW.KAHYANKTON.ORG](http://www.kahyankton.org).

On Parade



THE ANNUAL BOOK PARADE WAS HELD FRIDAY, MAY 9, AT YANKTON'S LINCOLN ELEMENTARY. STUDENTS WORE COSTUMES TO CELEBRATE THEIR FAVORITE BOOKS.

Czech Days

'14 Festival Dedicated To Kutilek

TABOR — Tabor's 66th annual Czech Days celebration is being dedicated to the late Josie Kutilek during ceremonies on Friday, June 20, in Sokol Park at 3 p.m.

Josephine "Josie" Kutilek was born east of Tabor to Frank and Mary (Koupal) Hale on Sept. 12, 1917. She passed away on May 1, 2011. Josie married Emil Kutilek on Jan. 4, 1937. Josie and Emil raised four daughters: Marlene (Ervin) Syrovatka, LaVonne (Ken) Yule, JoAnn Kutilek and Jeanene (Darrell) Edelman.

Josie and Emil ran Emil's Bar in Tabor for 21 years. They were big promoters of Czech Days which was a big thing for her. They went on



Kutilek

of friends from Nebraska and North Dakota that stayed at their house during Czech Days. Al Grebnick, a Polka Band, from Schuyler, Nebraska, stayed at their house when his band played in the bar during Czech Days. In 1997 Josie and her daughter Marlene and great granddaughter Cindy Syrovatka had the first Kolache Baking Demonstration for Czech in

the Community Center. Josie had the demonstration for six years. Josie loved gardening and embroidery. She baked kolaches and rye bread for people even when she lived in Lidi Apartments in Tyndall.

Josie loved to dance and taught a lot of her grandchildren how to dance. Her daughter LaVonne was Czech Days Queen. Granddaughters Norma Rokusek and Karen Evenson, and great-granddaughter Cindy Syrovatka were also Czech Days queens.

She was a member of St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church, Altar Society, Czech Heritage Preservation Society and a great promoter of the Tabor

Bluebirds Baseball team. Josie was the Czech Days Parade Marshall in 1996.

Josie's family declares Czech Days a National Holiday every year.

Czech Days will be held June 19-21 in Tabor.

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MORNING COFFEE
WEEKDAYS MONDAY-FRIDAY
Friday, May 23
7:40 am Press & Dakotan (Nathan Johnson)
8:20 am Yankton RibFest (Ben Hanten)