

ARTS & CULTURE

Lakes Area Arts

A Prairie Homeless Companion

WILLMAR – On Tuesday, April 23, 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the WEAC building, join Placebased Productions for a script reading of “A Prairie Homeless Companion” - a traveling, live radio show satirizing MPR’s Prairie Home Companion. Live music! Bad jokes! Real Stories! Experience an entertaining and poignant look at homelessness and housing instability in Southwest Minnesota. Free and open to the public!

“Neither Wolf Nor Dog”

NEW LONDON – Written and produced in Bemidji, Minnesota, get tickets to see this independent film on Sat. April 27, 7:30 p.m. and Sun. April 28, 2 p.m. at the Little Theatre. Synopsis: Author Kent Nerburn is drawn into the heart of contemporary Native American life by a 95-year-old Lakota elder, Dave Bald Eagle, and his side-kick, Richard Ray Whitman.

Lakeside Ballroom Dance

GLENWOOD – Ballroom Dance at Lakeside Ballroom in Glenwood on April 28, 3-7 p.m. Live Music with Tuxedo Junction. Lessons are included with admission and begin at 2 p.m. Dances are sponsored by Lakeside Dance Club. Public is invited to attend. For more information email: lakesideballroom.org or call David Wallin, Publicity Chair at 320-491-3245.

Blue Bells of Scotland

NEW LONDON – Enjoy a concert at the New London-Spicer Performing Arts Center, on April 28 at 2 p.m. featuring the “Blue Bells of Scotland,” an accompanied trombone solo - played by Devin Veenstra. A free will offering will be accepted. Contact Mary Pieh, Board Member at 320-212-0294.

Little Crow Photography Club meeting

The Little Crow Photography Club will meet from 7 to 9 p.m. on Monday, April 22 at the Kandiyohi County Historical Society in Willmar. This month’s topic will be the Art of Flower Photography. The photo contest for paid members is MACRO (a detailed close-up). Any age or level of experience is welcome to attend meetings for free. Annual dues are \$20.



Area photographer John Kellen guides his mother, Colleen along the Glacial Lakes State Trail Monday afternoon during one of their weekly photoshoots. As Colleen has been diagnosed with dementia, John recently put his international business career on hold to become an in-home caregiver for his mother. As part of their regular routine, the two take regular nature walks, snapping photos of wildlife and appreciating the “important things in life.”

Photo by Brett Blocker

As aging takes its toll, photography brings life back in focus for mother and son

By Brett Blocker
Editor

She may not always remember their outings, but that doesn’t stop John Kellen from creating new experiences with his mother.

Since the passing of his father last November, Kellen, an Arizona-based real estate brokerage and global travel business owner, returned to his hometown of Willmar to become a full-time caregiver for his mother, Colleen.

Colleen, 86, has been diagnosed with dementia and requires around-the-clock care. Rather than commit her to a senior living facility, John instead put his international business career on hold, rented a twin home in the area, and now spends his days nurturing a parent who once nurtured him.

Oftentimes, his care simply consists of venturing out along lakes area trails, absorbing nature and snapping the occasional photo for the local photography club. And while his mother isn’t much of a shutterbug, she’s more than happy to hold the lens bag.

With one hand around Colleen’s arm and the other on his Nikon, John guides his mother as they explore a new scenic venue at least once per week. They have taken primarily to birding, but admittedly, will shoot whatever sparks their interest.

“She loves the birds,” said John during a Monday afternoon outing along the Glacial Lakes State Trail. “She loves coming with, spotting turkeys, geese. And for me, it’s been amazing coming from the des-

ert and being able to see the flora up here.”

The outings give the two a chance to break the monotony of doctor’s appointments, medication administration, blood pressure monitoring, and all other manner of caregiving.

While his new role is quite literally a full-time commitment, John is more than happy to take on the challenge, having been inspired by a conversation with his ailing father shortly before his passing.

“In the four months before my dad died, we had some amazing conversations about what’s important in life,” John said. “And it’s not the stuff that’s important, it’s your ex-

perience; your relationships with family and friends. I started looking at my own mortality through the eyes of my parents.”

Although he initially vacillated on the decision of whether or not to put his career on hold and move back to Minnesota as an in-home caregiver, reflecting now on his choice, he has no doubt he made the right call.

“The more I’m here, the more I’m glad I made that decision. I can work until the day I die, but I’ll never have this time again with mom.”

Equally important to caring for his mother, however, is taking time to care for himself – “caring for the caregiver,” as

John puts it.

“As a caregiver, you need to make sure to care for yourself, too. It’s important to find hobbies you really love doing and do those. If you can find things you enjoy doing, it lightens [the stress] of responsibility. What I’ve found is photography.”

But the hobby isn’t just good for John. So, too, has it improved the overall health of his mother.

After a nature walk, he said, “her appetite is better, her vocabulary increases. It’s occurred to me that these outings we go on are good for both of

us on different levels. I see the difference when we’re back home. She’s more content and she sleeps better.”

Due to her short-term memory loss, photography also provides Colleen a tangible anchor to her past.

Although she can remember the names of people she knew 60 years ago, she has difficulty remembering recent events, including what she has eaten for breakfast.

“What I’m finding is if I can reconnect her with an

Photography

Continued on page 15

STEVEN LEWIS SIMPSON FILM
NEITHER WOLF NOR DOG
FROM THE BEST-SELLING NATIVE AMERICAN NOVEL

Sat. April 27th, 7:30pm
Sun. April 28th, 2:00pm

New London Little Theatre
24 Central Ave E.
New London

DAVE BALD EAGLE CHRISTOPHER SWEENEY RICHARD RAY WHITMAN

Tickets: \$7.50ea (One price for all ages). Reserve online at newlondonlittletheatre.com or pay at the door.

THE WORLD IS NOT AN ACCIDENT
WE DON'T ALWAYS GET TO CHOOSE OUR PARTS

MUSIC FROM THE BRITISH ISLES

Prairie Winds Concert Band
J. Brock Duncan, Conductor

Along with member of the New London-Spicer High School Band
Nick Mason, Conductor

*****NEW LOCATION*****

Performing Arts Center New London/Spicer High School
Featuring Trombone Soloist Devin Veenstra
“Blue Bells of Scotland”

Southwest Minnesota Arts Council
CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT

This activity is made possible in part by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the SW Minnesota Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

2:00 pm Sunday April 28, 2019
New London-Spicer Performing Arts Center
free will offering

ART PLACE DIRECTORY

GOSSMAN POTTERY
313 1st Ave SE,
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GREENWATER GARAGE
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https://greenwatergarage.com
Monday Nights: 6-8pm We paint;
Tues Nights: 6-8pm Drawing club

HISTORIC TERRACE MILL
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15 Franklin SW
Hutchinson, MN 55350
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JAZZ N’ JAVA / WHITNEY MUSIC
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www.whitneymusic.com
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Thurs Night meal & music: 5pm
Sat Morn: Bluegrass Jam 8:30-11am
Mon Eve After Hours Jam:

5:30-7pm
/project-3/
http://www.thetravelingmuseum.com/
bergh72@gmail.com
andrewandlisa@charter.net

LAKES AREA RADIO THEATER
2214 Geneva Road NE
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NL ARTS ALLIANCE
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RURAL AESTHETIC INITIATIVE
http://www.lisabergh.com

THE BARN THEATER
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NEW LONDON LITTLE THEATRE
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www.newlondonlittletheatre.com

WILLMAR COMMUNITY EDUCATION
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