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SEPTEMBER 2021

NEWS



Blooming business

Jeanette Eiler cuts fresh flowers from her garden to market to BisMan Community Food Cooperative and others. Read more about Blue Barn Bouquets inside.

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Blooming business

Blue Barn Bouquets markets fresh flowers locally

BY LUANN DART

A bee flits among the flowers, drawn by the kaleidoscope of color in the garden at Blue Barn Bouquets. Owner Jeanette Eiler flits amidst the flower garden, too, clipping stems to gather a fragrant bouquet. Jeanette planted her first flower garden in North Dakota soil last year at the family home north of Mandan, served by Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative.

“Blue Barn Bouquets was a dream that began in January 2020, while living in our apartment before we had land or knew if we ever would have any. We thought it would be a fun challenge and if we never sold a single bloom, at least we would have lovely flowers to enjoy,” she says in a BisMan Community Food Cooperative Facebook post.

Today, she wholesales flower bouquets to the BisMan Community Food Cooperative and cut flowers to Bismarck’s Crabapple Floral, which uses the flowers in its own bouquets.

Zinnias, calendulas, bachelor buttons and bells of Ireland all flourish at Blue Barn Bouquets, where annual and perennial flowers, wildflowers and greenery are all grown to create bouquets. Jeanette plans color palettes within the garden, so the bouquets match in color and aesthetics, pointing to a more rustic variety that might not make the cut next year.

Originally from Maryland, Jeanette remembers vegetable gardening with her family as a child.

“We didn’t have very many flowers and in my mind, what was the point of flowers? You can’t eat them,”



she says with a laugh. “Although, I always had a fascination for a wildflower field.”

She moved to North Dakota five years ago after accepting a nursing job in Bismarck.

“Since then, North Dakota has been my home,” she says.

When Jeanette and her husband, Josh, moved to a rural property along the Missouri River last year, Jeanette decided to dive into her creative side and plant a flower garden.

After 2-year-old Anna was born, Jeanette became a stay-at-home mom, now with 6-month-old John as well. She works one weekend a month as a nurse, but wanted to try a home-based business.

“We were trying to think of small ways to add to the income and have something non-kid-related to do. I love being home with them, but it’s nice to have something else to think toward,” she says.

“In my research, I came across a few other flower farmers and it looked so fun and it seemed like a small risk, to a degree. I had a garden space anyway, so I thought I’d try some flowers within it and if everything failed, at least I might have a few extra bouquets in my house or to give away,” she says. “I love trying new things.”

Last summer, she planted her first flower garden, with limited success.

But failures are acceptable within the garden as Jeanette experiments with varieties.

“When I first started this year, I had many teary days. I would come in and say, ‘Nothing is growing.’ Now, how beautiful is that,” she says, pointing to the rows of blooms. “I do love the experimentation, seeing what works. It’s been fun and they’re just so beautiful.”

She studied more varieties over the winter, then planted about a dozen different flowers this summer, with different varieties within each type of flower in her 30x50 plot. Four rows of flowers and a row of vegetables are watered with drip irrigation and weeds are controlled organically.

“That has been well, well worthwhile. It was saved many a dying plant,” she says of the irrigation. She saves seeds from her flowers to plant the next year, starting seedlings on a south-facing windowsill in her home, direct seeding or using winter sowing, in which seeds are planted in milk jugs and left outside to sprout naturally.

“We really like experimenting,” she says. Cardboard was placed on



PHOTOS BY LUANN DART

one pathway to control weeds, while weeds were burned with a torch in the other pathways. Compost is used for fertilizer as well.

She also follows advice from a Bismarck Mandan Garden Club Facebook group.

“I love reading those and seeing what people suggest, because I’m new to gardening in North Dakota. I’m new to some of the insects and the different type of soil than I’m used to in Maryland, so I’ve been learning a lot through the experienced gardeners,” she says.

The name for her business, Blue Barn Bouquets, was inspired by a light blue barn on the property.

“I know it’s more of a shed,” she says with a laugh, “but it’s a barn to me and I love it! In the coming years, we hope to paint the faded blue siding to make it a more prominent blue color.”

Each week, she picks four to six bouquets for delivery to the BisMan Community Food Cooperative.

“That’s worked out really nicely,” she says.

“I’m very comfortable starting on a smaller scale. My first priority is my kids and my family,” she says.



Jeanette Eiler saves seeds from her flower garden to plant for the next year using a variety of seeding techniques.



“I don’t want to get way overwhelmed. I need to be a mom and wife first.”

Her future aspirations are to start selling at a farmers market and possibly start a CSA (community supported agriculture), in which subscribers would receive weekly bouquets. She also wants to expand her plot to include more wildflower patches, where more bees will be invited to flit. ■

To learn more:
Contact Blue Barn Bouquets
owner Jeanette Eiler
at 240-381-2600.



Next to the garden is the building that inspired the business name, Blue Barn Bouquets.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative shares drought resources



N.D. Department of Agriculture
www.nd.gov/ndda/drought-resources

This site includes a hay map, with listings of those selling hay, buying hay and hay haulers.

North Dakota’s farmers and ranchers who have sold, or are considering selling, livestock because of drought face the prospect of a higher income tax bill due to the unplanned sales. Special federal income tax rules are available to producers who find it necessary to sell more livestock than they normally would because of drought. This site includes more information on drought-related disaster designations and tax implications for producers.

The site also lists information from other agencies.

North Dakota State University Extension
www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/disasters/north-dakota-livestock-drought-resources

On this site is information on a variety of drought-related topics, including livestock and crop production; lawns, gardens and trees; farm/family stress; and archives of drought webinars.

This site also includes links to other resources.

N.D. Water Commission
www.swc.nd.gov/project_development/drought_disaster_livestock.html

This site includes information on the Drought Disaster Livestock Water Supply Project Assistance Program, including an online application.

North Dakota Response
<https://ndresponse.gov/2018-archive-0/drought-resources>

Here, find the latest news from the state of North Dakota regarding the drought.

Bank of North Dakota
<https://bnd.nd.gov>

The N.D. Industrial Commission has approved two Bank of North Dakota loan programs to help livestock producers cover their expenses during this year’s drought.

One is the Livestock Drought Loan Program, which is good for purchasing feed, transporting feed or livestock, obtaining water and other costs.

The second is the Livestock Rebuilder Loan Program, which is for post-drought relief and can help ranchers who have had to sell off cattle for lack of feed. ■



GARRETT KUHN

GLEN ULLIN

N.D. FFA President

Garrett Kuhn, a Glen Ullin High School graduate, plans to attend North Dakota State University in the fall as he continues his duties as the North Dakota FFA president.

BY LUANN DART

When Garrett Kuhn first donned his blue corduroy FFA jacket as a seventh-grader at Glen Ullin Public School, little did he dream he would one day become the 2021-22 North Dakota FFA president, the top FFA leadership role in the state.

“I guess it’s really like a dream come true,” says the son of Matt and Theresa Kuhn, members of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative.

Garrett is serving in a state leadership role after being elected as the 2021-22 North Dakota FFA president during the FFA State Convention in June.

State office candidates go through a series of interviews, an impromptu scenario, a team-building activity and a written test. A screening committee then nominates candidates for each office.





NORTH DAKOTA FFA



As FFA president, **Garrett Kuhn** hopes to inspire more FFA members to take part in competitions by developing videos to fully explain each event.

As a state officer, Garrett spent the summer in training sessions, at the North Dakota State Fair, and will attend the National FFA Convention in October in Indianapolis, Ind.

Garrett joined his local FFA chapter at the end of his seventh-grade year, and was immediately elected to a local chapter office, serving as vice president through his sophomore year, then as president as a junior and senior.

He was nudged to join by his first advisor, he says.

"She nudged me toward it and I'm really grateful she did, because I wouldn't have a lot of the friends and experiences that I've had with FFA," he says.

"We had a really good chapter. Even though it's really small, we've

always had a good time with our chapter," he says. FFA Week was always a highlight for the local chapter, as they hosted activities for all the students.

"We always try to put on the absolutely best thing we can possibly do," he describes.

At the end of his sophomore year, Garrett hit a speed bump, as all the other FFA officers graduated and the local chapter advisor left.

"I was the only one left standing. I was scared we were going to lose our chapter, but I pulled it together and got everything situated and our next advisor was really, really good, so it was one of the best years," he says.

With plans to attend North Dakota State University next fall to study political science and/or economics with a goal to become a lawyer, Garrett is the first state officer from his local chapter, which has about 15 members and is advised by Zack Krein.

He's found inspiration outside his local chapter, too, including from a former FFA state president, Brianna Maddock, who assigned a state officer to every chapter to mentor when she was president.

"She had taken particular interest in our chapter. Everyone says she was the best president we ever had and I totally believe that. She was a phenomenal gal," Garrett says. When Brianna selected Garrett to

give the reflection speech at the state convention during her tenure, it inspired him as well.

"That just really made me want to run for state office," he says.

As president, he wants to tackle his own project: creating a video for each competition to explain fully how to do the competition.

"Some chapters don't do these events, because they just don't know how to do it and I feel like that's a huge waste," he says. "We're trying to make it so everyone and anyone can do a competition. It's going to be a huge learning opportunity for everyone."

Garrett competed himself in FFA, winning high individual his junior year in land judging and seeing team success in range judging.

"That's always been one I really, really enjoy. It's a very hard competition," he says about range judging. "I love competing in the events. Even though I don't believe my future is in agriculture, I've still loved every single moment I've had with FFA."

"FFA isn't just about learning how to become a farmer. It's so much more than that," he says. "I've made so many of my best friends in life through FFA. It's given me lifelong lessons and lifelong friends."

Garrett hopes to inspire others to join FFA, too.

"It's given me a whole new perspective on life and friends who also see that perspective. I was on the fence, too, when I started, but after going and trying the competitions and getting to meet a bunch of people, it really changed my mind. ... After doing a couple competitions, I was hooked," he shares.

And he appreciates those who have supported him over the years.

"Thank you to everyone who got me here," he says. ■



Look up and look around ... Farm equipment is on the move



While farmers focus on the ground when sowing and harvesting, looking up is just as important — especially when operating farm equipment near power lines.

For your safety, make sure you have at least 10 feet of clearance between power lines and your combines, grain augers, pickers, balers and front-end loaders.

Keep in mind that uneven ground and shifting soil conditions can put you in harm's way.

Look up and look around when operating equipment. Power lines and poles may be closer than you think.

If you see a power line issue that may need Mor-Gran-Sou's attention, please call the co-op at 701-597-3301, 701-663-0297 or 800-750-8212. Or, send an email to safety@morgransou.com with location information and a photo, if possible. Working together helps ensure the safety of all.



Cody Graetz



Jason Jahner



Kale Ohlauer



**Mor-Gran-Sou
Electric Cooperative**

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MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

board meeting highlights



Meeting date: July 28, 2021

- Held board of directors reorganization
- Approved June 23 board meeting minutes
- Approved two work order inventories and a special equipment capitalization
- Reviewed the monthly directors' financial report
- Reviewed the MGS financial report for June
- Reviewed senior staff department reports
- Reviewed general counsel report
- Reviewed co-general managers/CEOs update and report on meetings attended
- Approved board meeting minutes from Basin Electric and its subsidiaries
- Heard directors' recap on meetings attended
- Reviewed WDUS/3C Construction update
- Heard update on Southwest Power Pool and viewed 2021 annual meeting minutes
- Heard update and viewed diagram for remodel of new Mandan office
- Approved 2022 MGS board meeting dates/locations
- Approved request for solar battery pack for research and development with contract to be presented next month
- Approved NDAREC loan guarantee
- Cast CoBank ballot
- Approved participation in Western States Power Corporation for 2022
- Reaffirmed C. Ternes as acting secretary for the MGS board of directors
- Discussed attendance for the REPAC/PAC-T NDAREC fundraiser and Industry Summit
- Set the 2022 MGS annual meeting date for July 15, 2022, with a tentative location
- Elected voting delegate & alternate for NRECA Region 6 meeting
- Held executive session

Upcoming regular board meeting date:

Sept. 29 - 9:30 a.m. CT/8:30 a.m. MT - Bismarck
Oct. 27 - time TBA - Bismarck

Members are welcome to attend board meetings. Due to COVID-19, plans may change. Please call the office at 1-800-750-8212 or 597-3301 to confirm the meeting status if you wish to attend. To place an item on the agenda, please contact Board Chair Casey Wells or Co-General Manager/CEO Donald Franklund at 701-597-3301 at least one week in advance. Members may obtain a copy of approved board minutes by completing and returning the "Request for Information or Data" form. You can find this form at www.morgransou.com, or contact the Flasher office to request a copy.

SAVE YOUR MONEY
BY REDUCING ELECTICITY YOU USE

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO SAVE!

A home energy assessment can help stop wasted energy, too. Little bits of energy waste add up, so make sure all the systems in your home are working at peak efficiency:

- Set your water heater temperature at 120 degrees, which is hot enough for comfortable showers without wasting energy.
- Energy-efficient LED lighting uses less energy and lasts longer than conventional incandescent bulbs.
- Use a programmable thermostat to set home temperatures forward or back while you're asleep or away to save up to 10% on your heating and cooling costs.
- Electronics continue to use energy even when they're fully charged or turned off. Use advanced power strips to stop these vampire loads from feasting on your electricity.
- Seal cracks and gaps around your home with caulk or expanding foam. This acts as a windbreaker for your home, helping the insulation work up to its full potential.
- Ductwork exposed in unconditioned spaces, like attics, should also be air-sealed and insulated. This will keep you from heating and cooling the great outdoors. ■



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