

Backyard sustainability seminar set for April 17

Homeowners, landlords, and landscaping professionals can gain important information on sustainable methods on April 14 in Elk Point.

The South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service will offer this seminar on conservation and sustainable practices as part of the GreenScapes program. The program's goal is to teach people the basics of backyard sustainability and conservation. The April 14 event takes place from 4:30-8 p.m. at the Union County Courthouse, 209 E. Main St., Elk Point.

The seminars cost \$15 per person, which includes materials and a meal. An additional person can share materials with a registered participant for an additional \$10 fee. Registration is required one week prior to the event. To sign up, send payment and contact information to the Minnehaha County Extension office, attention Chris Zdorovtsov, 220 W. Sixth St., Sioux Falls, SD 57104. Checks should be made to the "South

District Horticulture Fund."

Three speakers will present information on sustainable landscaping and gardening at each session. Chris Zdorovtsov, Minnehaha County Horticulture Extension Educator, will discuss plant selections and design tips for edible landscaping. Rick Mayko, a community forester with the South Dakota Department of Agriculture, will offer a presentation on tree diversity and great trees for South Dakota landscapes. Cynthia Bergman, Yankton County Extension Horticulture Educator, will offer tips on soil health and the use of manure in gardens.

Call Extension Horticulture Educator Chris Zdorovtsov for questions on the GreenScapes seminars at 605-367-7877, or call Extension Horticulture Educator Cynthia Bergman in Yankton at 605-665-3387. Individuals who require special assistance are welcome to attend. Let organizers know of requirements when you call to register.

WACIPI

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society, there are protocols and there are rules.

"The Native American culture traditionally is a very orderly society, and we have to be very careful to follow these protocols. If we don't follow them properly, everything can get out of sync, plus we get scolded by our elders," LaPlante said with a grin. "There's always that watchful eye looking over us, making sure that we're doing everything properly, and it's also about trying to treat everybody with as much respect and dignity, and trying to respect every tribal community."

Tiospaye U., an on-campus organization at the University of South Dakota for Native American and non-Native American students dedicated to promoting Native American life on campus, hosted the event in the Muenster University Center on the USD campus March 26-27.

"They've done an absolutely fantastic job of putting this together," LaPlante said.

The weekend's events began Friday night with an alumni dinner held in the Muenster University Center. The banquet was held to honor Native American USD alumni including the recipient of the 1974 Alumni Achievement Award, John H. Artichoker, Jr. from the classes of 1951 and 1957.

In addition to Artichoker, 55 other Native American graduates were recognized for the contributions they've made in their communities and in the workplace since they received their degrees from USD.

"Friday night was the first time they've had the alumni dinner back on campus in a number of years," said LaPlante, a USD grad who recently was appointed by Gov. Dennis Daugaard as the state's first secretary of tribal relations, a cabinet-level post. "They had over 300 people come in and be a part of that dinner."

The students who make up Tiospaye U. come from across South Dakota and the upper Midwest.

"They bring with them the expertise that they've learned over the years. They bring a lot of talent with them that they've acquired by being a part of the powwows held in their communities," LaPlante said.

By Sunday morning, it was estimated that as many as 300 people had traveled to Vermillion to participate in this year's annual event. Student organizers saw their hard work pay off in a big way - and also offer a unique challenge at the same time.

Last year's Wacipi, held in the roomier Vermillion High School gymnasium, attracted between 150 to 200 dancers, said Wyatt Pickner, president of Tiospaye U.

The MUC's ballroom offered fewer square feet for up to 300 dancers, drum groups, singers and audience members. The student organizers, however, helped everyone work and dance in the cozier quarters.

"This event is definitely a huge success," said Pickner, a junior at USD majoring in American Indian Studies/Clinical Lab studies who is a member of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe. "Definitely everyone could get a sense of how small the area is we have to work with this year, but at the same time, I also felt that it helped bring everyone closer together."

"Knowing that we were able

to put something together like this is extremely overwhelming and we're so happy with the turnout," he said.

Many participants - some who are USD alumni - traveled from as far away as California, Texas, Georgia and the East Coast to take part in last weekend's events.

"To be able to bring people here like that, and to have them meet with students on campus here, and to meet with community members and local spectators at the powwow is very powerful," Pickner said.

The Wacipi was open to anyone who wished to attend. Those not familiar with the customs of a powwow soon noticed different styles of dance taking place on the ballroom floor. The men's traditional dance symbolizes a battle or the story of a hunt. The men's grass dance is said to have come from the past, when dancers were sent in first to stomp down long grass to make a clearing for the other dancers during a powwow.

Men's fancy dancing became a traditional part of Wacipi in the late 1900s. This style is preferred by boys and young men, who wear brilliantly-colored bustles and dance regalia.

The women's traditional dance is simple in appearance, but plays a very important symbolic role. The dancers move their feet to the beat of the drum to represent the heartbeat of mother earth, to heal the world.

Many of the women and young girls wore jingle dresses. The small jingles that adorn their clothing, made of twisted tin, represent waves of water and thunder as they performed what is known as a healing dance.

It was impossible to not notice the female dancers who performed in the style commonly referred to as fancy. These dancers wore elaborately beaded dance regalia, covered by long, decorated, fringed shawls. These Wacipi participants made efforts to resemble beautiful butterflies, spreading out their shawl-covered arms as they spun in tiny circles on the crowded floor in the university center.

LaPlante, a 2009 graduate of the USD School of Law, lives in Vermillion with his wife, who is an assistant professor at the university. He said the weekend felt a bit like a homecoming. "I'm very proud of my roots that I've been able to lay down here in Vermillion," LaPlante said.

It is fitting, he said, that an event designed to honor the university's graduates was held on the campus, because it gave those USD grads a chance to talk about the importance of education to the youth in attendance.

"I think every alumnus, and there are many here this weekend, are an ambassador," LaPlante said. "We encourage our young people to attend college and get that post secondary education, and if they choose USD, all the better."

"I'm proud of my alma mater, and I take every opportunity I can to encourage our young Indian people to get that education," he said. "You don't realize it as an alumnus, but the students look at you, and I'm really grateful that I'm able to set an example that way. Education is the key. Without education, it limits your possibilities, but with education, you have unlimited possibilities."

One of the people who helped lay the cornerstone of Native American education at USD in the 1970s was in attendance last weekend.

"The goal at that time was to train Indians and other minorities in guidance and counseling," said Eric LaPointe. "Dr. Tom Gooden initially got the first federal grant, and it was in the school of education."

The program started with 20 students, who, after two years, graduated with their master's degrees. "It was the first time we ever had that number in South Dakota graduate with that degree," he said.

As LaPointe was finishing up work on his master's degree at the University of Montana, he was asked to work on creating a satellite program that would offer educational opportunities at USD, the University of North Dakota, Eastern Washington, the University of Washington and the University of Montana.

"The concept was that every summer, the students would come to the center here at USD, and I was the center director," LaPointe said. "Students would pick up their first six to 10 hours of study here at USD, and then during the academic year, they would go to their respective satellite schools and continue their studies there."

Approximately 25 students participated in each of three consecutive years in this satellite program, and it turned out to be a godsend. "We were fortunate

because the teacher corps was just winding down, and there was a lot of Indian people who had just gotten their bachelor's degrees throughout this five-state region."

As these graduates entered the education field as counselors and continued working on their master's degrees, eventually there came a push to steer more Native American educators into the field of school administration, special education and library and media fields.

"At one time, from 1977 to 1983, the center satellite program had faded out so everything was here at USD," LaPointe said. "We were averaging at least 10 to 12 graduates every year with their master's in those disciplines, and at the same time we were able to get some funding so that some students could back here and receive their doctorate degrees."

Today, LaPointe works for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Idaho, in part because federal funding that allowed Native American education programs to flourish at USD began to dry up in the 1980s.

Young Native American people still have the same quest for education. "You need that advanced degree because you then come better prepared to work with students. The motivation is there, and we're about at the point where we need to try something like this again," he said.

LaPointe said young Native American people are now "spreading their wings" so to speak, and seeking education opportunities in a wide variety of fields, from law and medicine to education and social work.

"I'm staying busy this weekend, telling young people to not set their goals too short. They need to think big, and not shortchange themselves," he said.

The dancing eventually stopped late Saturday night to give participants a chance to catch some sleep. Late Sunday morning, beating drums and raised voices heralded everyone back into the ballroom to continue the celebration.

"This is very important to our way of life," LaPlante said. "These are our cultural ways. We come together to celebrate life, to celebrate each other, to celebrate our culture and our language, our songs and our dance. For this brief time over the weekend, we are all one in this circle."

OBITUARIES

Richard Manning

Richard J. Manning, age 60, of San Francisco died on March 13, 2011 in Dubai, after a short struggle with cancer. Richard John Manning was born Jan. 26, 1951 in Vermillion. He attended Vermillion High School graduating in 1969, and then attended USD graduating in 1973.

At the time of his death he was the director & regional manager for AISPO, (service provider for various insurances groups) CA. Traveling and visiting new places was a desire and love that he pursued.

He was preceded in death by parents, Dan and Leda Manning.

Survivors include his brothers, James Manning, Burbank, Edward (Dinah) Manning,



MANNING

Omaha, NE; sisters, Phyllis (Bernie) Brommer, St. Paul, MN, Arlene Olson, Sioux Falls, Beverly (John) Kramer, Belleville,

WI, Sharyl (Richard) Kressler, Prescott Valley, AZ, Janelle (Ross) Schochenmaier, Aberdeen, and several nieces and nephews. Special friends: Robert Ramsey and Lorraine Hart.

His ashes will be buried at Garryowen Cemetery with a private family gathering in celebration of his life.

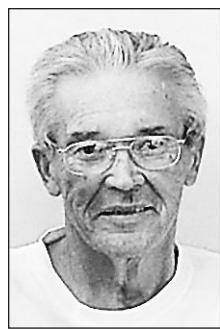
Sterling Merrigan

Sterling Francis (Bud) Merrigan passed away March 21, 2011 in Shawnee, KS after a valiant battle with colon cancer. He was surrounded in death by his daughters, sister Liz and brother Jeff.

He is preceded in death by his wife, Dorene Merrigan; son, Tregg Jon Merrigan; his parents, Hazel and John Earl Merrigan; and sisters, Jeannie Girard and Mary O'Neill. He is survived by two daughters, Tonya Merrigan of Olathe, KS and Tyffani Richards of Shawnee, KS; a son-in-law, Edward Bruce Richards; two grandsons, Edward Reed Richards and Jack Tregg Richards; nine brothers and sisters, Virginia (Ed) Hartmann of Akron, IA, Vernon Merrigan of Benson, AZ; Stanley (Carolyn) Merrigan of Alcester, Elizabeth Merrigan of Burbank, Ethel (Bill Northwall) Merrigan of Tampa, FL, Jim Merrigan of Vermillion, Margaret (Warren) Smith of Milwaukee, WI, Joanne Merrigan of Savannah, GA and Jeff (Ellen) Merrigan of Worthington, MN.

He was born June 11, 1940 in Vermillion. He graduated from Vermillion High School in 1958 and then spent time in the Army serving in Korea and Japan. He married Dorene Jorgensen on March 30, 1964 at St. Agnes Catholic Church in Vermillion. They lived in Vermillion and Sheldon, IA for a short time before moving to Sioux City, IA, where they raised their children and spent the rest of their working days.

Sterling worked for Metz Baking Company in both Sheldon and Sioux City and later was the owner/operator of several gas stations in Sioux City. He and Dorene spent their retirement



MERRIGAN

winters in south Texas and summers in the Midwest where he was an avid golfer and loved to socialize with all. His pride and joy

were his two grandsons, Reed and Jack. He was a wonderful husband, father, brother, grandfather and friend who will be missed.

A visitation and funeral mass is scheduled for April 2, 2011 at Nativity Catholic Church, Sioux City, IA. The family will take visitors from 9 to 10 a.m. with the mass to follow immediately at 10 a.m. Burial will follow in Calvary Cemetery. Honorary pall bearers will include Vernon Merrigan, Stanley Merrigan, Jim Merrigan, Jeff Merrigan, Bruce Richards and Monte Jaacks. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to Grace Hospice, 9233 Ward Parkway, Suite 201, Kansas City, MO 64114.

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Betty Jean Turner

Betty Turner, born in Vermillion, March 12, 1925, died in Tulsa OK, March 28, 2011. Betty passed away peacefully at her home, surrounded by her family. In lieu of flowers, donations to Hospice of Green Country, (2121 South Columbia, Ste 200, Tulsa OK 74114) are appreciated.

The family is grateful for the loving care provided by Hospice of Green Country. Special thanks to Suzanne, Jeanne, Marie, Rita, Leisa, Irene, Cheryl, and her homecare provider Virginia.

Services are Saturday April 2, 10 a.m., at Floral Haven Broken Arrow, OK.

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