MEET THE LOCALS, BATTLE LAKE: GREGORY GERHART

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By Heather Rule

Battle Lake resident Gregory Gerhart is a self-taught photographer, sharing his photos with others as a gift.

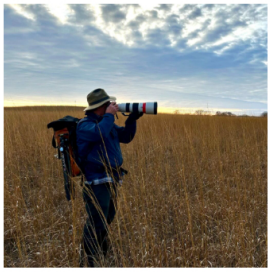
"I do it for just the love of doing it," Gerhart said.

But his background was never in photography.

Gerhart is originally from the small town of Brownsdale in southeastern Minnesota. He bought a business and raised a family in Belle Plaine for 17 years before he and his wife moved to Battle Lake. Gerhart was a federal meat inspector from 2005-21 before retiring.

Gerhart bought a decent camera to photograph his sons playing sports. Then in 2016 his wife Denise was diagnosed with cancer. As the disease progressed, one of the things Gerhart and his wife could do together was get in their truck and go take pictures. It was during this time – the five-year cancer journey before Denise passed away in spring 2021 – that Gerhart discovered his love of photography.

His photography has turned into a gift he shares with the community. He gives photos to cancer fundraisers and donates to churches and other events. It was never his intention to sell his photos.



He really enjoys taking photos of landscapes and nature, from butterflies to mushrooms. He'll take his 36-pound backpack with cameras and lenses without a plan and rather has "nature present it to me," he said, "whether it's raining or snow or whatever it is. It's just my peace and serenity and my place to go and have a camera with me."

He likes to take photos daily, including at Glendalough State Park at least two times a week. He's taken many photos of the Northern Lights, and helped other people find them as well.

Gerhart has more than 180 photo canvasses hanging up in his living room, a display of his gift for any visitors who sit in his living room.

"They have to tell me their favorite picture or photo today and why," Gerhart said. "That's kind of fun."

The encouragement and inspiration for photography from his late wife made him realize that a gift like his ability to take photographs and share them "is what it's about."

"That's a gift she gave me," Gerhart said. "I think along with that, I've found some tenderness that I didn't know I had."

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