

EDITORIAL



Never underestimate small towns

One of the annual fall campaigns making the rounds is for the Dutch Heritage Boosters.

Those of us who are long-term residents of Orange City shouldn't take this group of volunteers for granted. They spice up our local scene by maintaining the original Little White Store building and the The Century Home (currently dressed up in holiday finery). They sponsored the Saturday, Dec. 3, Sinterklaas Day (pretty well attended, despite 20-degree temperatures for the parade). During the Tulip Festival volunteers carry flags of The Netherlands provinces, then hurry over to the staging area to wheel the carts that showcase again the country from which emigrants came to start the town of Orange City.

Those efforts require financial support. Poffertjes were served as a fundraiser during the festival from the Little White Store and on selected days during the summer. The group hosted 10 concerts in northwestern Iowa by Rotterdam native Arjan Breukhoven. The town council also contributes support to the group.

Their funding campaign includes an essay detailing the civil rights legacy of a prior resident of The Century Home, Judge Martin Van Oosterhout.

This year is the 68th anniversary of the Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka Supreme Court decision which required integration of all public schools in the U.S. Van Oosterhout, educated in public school, University of Iowa and its law school, returned to Orange City to practice law and be elected to the Iowa state legislature. After becoming a local judge, Van Oosterhout was appointed by President Eisenhower to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

From that St. Louis courtroom, Van Oosterhout worked for eight years, participating in 1,500 cases, authoring 545 opinions and 37 dissents.

The federal court ruled on issues of segregation in schools, notably a 1957 appeal brought by the NAACP on behalf of nine students of the Little Rock School District. They were the first black students to be integrated into Little Rock's Central High School.

Van Oosterhout was one of the three judges to hear that appeal. That ruling that the constitutional rights of the students involved were violated was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which upheld it.

Van Oosterhout died serving as a senior judge on that court.

What's the point? Orange City was the springboard of Van Oosterhout's career, and the town's heritage helped make that possible.

Read all about the organization and the summary of Van Oosterhout's contribution to jurisprudence in the campaign flyer available from the boosters. And, think about supporting the Dutch Heritage Boosters with donations, and think about becoming a volunteer. If they can find a dozen more folks, perhaps, volunteers won't have to hurry to take part in each Tulip Festival parade twice.

— DOUG CALSBEEK
Co-editor

Genological Society Christmas celebration planned

LE MARS — The Northwest Iowa Genealogical Society will hold its annual Christmas celebration on Saturday, Dec. 17th at 1:30 p.m. in the gymnasium of the Plymouth County Historical Museum, 335 1st Avenue SW in Le Mars. In lieu of a program, members will share family heritage foods and recipes. The feasting and camaraderie will commence after the usual business meeting. The public is welcome to participate.

One family delicacy that members might get to try is the speculoos cookie favored by the groups' secretary, Jean Nilles. Typically buttery shortbread cookies spiced with cinnamon, ground cloves and cardamom, they are sometimes made as Dutch Windmill cookies. Jean makes hers in a more standard round form. Though the ingredients are basically the same, the shapes of these cookies vary according to the prevailing culture, as does the spelling. Besides speculoos, they can also be called speculatus or speculaas. Their origin is difficult to pinpoint, but they are popular in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, northern France and Luxembourg. As Nilles is a member of the Luxembourg Heritage Society of Northwest Iowa, it's likely her version started in that small landlocked European country.

In addition to homemade sweet treats, some members will contribute delightful savory or hearty foods to balance out the spread. It's a wonderful way to partake in and learn about the differences and similarities of the members' divergent backgrounds. That's part of the draw of genealogical research.



RAMBLINGS Creative aging: OK, Google

By CAROL VAN KLOMPENBURG
Correspondent

"Respect your parents. They passed school without Google." – Internet meme

Alexa runs my son Chad's home. Her power and obedience amaze me.

When Chad wants the lights on, he simply says, "Alexa, turn on the living room lights." She pleasantly responds, "OK." And the lights come on.

When he wakes up in the morning, he says, "Alexa, turn on the coffeemaker." Again, her gentle voice consents, and the coffeemaker starts.

He tells us if he leaves home and doesn't remember whether he has closed the garage door, he talks to Alexa on his smart phone. "Alexa," he says, "Close the garage door." If the door is open, Alexa closes it.

A computer programmer, my techie son tells me that to accomplish these feats, he needs an Alexa device in his house and on his phone. He also needs a device on each apparatus he wants to manage.

After Chad has wowed us with Alexa, we visit my equally techie younger sister, a retired computer software representative. Alexa doesn't run Kathy's home. Google does. When Kathy needs to time her cooking, she says, "OK, Google. Set timer for 10 minutes." Google obeys.

When she is running out of milk, she says, "OK, Google. Add milk to grocery list." Google obeys.

"That's incredible," I say to her. "Google serves you the way Alexa serves Chad." Google hears his name and asks me, "How can I help?"

"Oops!" I say.

"Yes," said Kathy. "You must be careful with his name. I just refer to him as 'G' when I don't want to wake him up."

"Doesn't it bother you having a device in your home that hears everything you say?" I ask. "Especially when that device is connected to the internet."

"You already run the same risk on your phone, and you carry

that with you everywhere, don't you?" she responds.

I suppose I do.

"How much would I need to invest to get started using Google like that?" I ask.

"You have Google on your phone, right?" she responds.

"Sure," I say. I already use Google for my calendar and address book. I often ask him to provide information such as word spellings, state capitals, or ages of famous people. But I have never thought of asking him do other work for me.

I am not interested in a smart home. But I am jealous of having a servant to keep lists and set timers for me.

"You wouldn't need to invest any money at all," Kathy says. "Give me your phone."

I hand it over. She pokes around on it for a minute and says, "It's ready to go."

She has downloaded a free "Keep Notes" app and then googled how to link it to the Google software. After she links it, she tells me to try giving some instructions.

I tell Google to add milk to my grocery list. Google complies.

"Oh dear!" I say. "I don't really want that on my grocery list."

"Then tell him to delete it," says Kathy.

I tell him. He deletes it.

Over the next several weeks, I find Google to be a cooperative servant who keeps my life in order. He keeps multiple lists, and his timers keep me from burning food and missing appointments.

I feel like such a 21st-century woman when I walk through the grocery aisles with a smart phone in my hand instead of a wrinkled piece of paper.

The first time in the grocery store, though, my phone goes to sleep every 30 seconds, and I must wake it up to read the next item.

Back home, I remember how my sister googled for instructions on linking software. I follow her example and google how to set my screen timeout.

My screen now stays awake for half an hour.

Imitating my techie relatives, I'm beginning to feel a wee bit techie myself.

WET-NOSE RESCUE HONORS THREE AT OPEN HOUSE

LE MARS — Three people were in the spotlight during the Wet-Nose Rescue shelter open house Saturday, Dec. 3, when rooms were named in their honor.

Over 100 people attended the event to showcase the new shelter and the cats and dogs up for adoption.

First came the naming of the clinic room after Dr. John Conley, who advised the shelter in its effort this past year to gain a state license. Wet-Nose president Angel Anderson unveiled the sign as the crowd applauded the 91-year-old veterinarian who owns and operates Town and Country Veterinary Clinic in Le Mars. The new shelter's clinic room is located near the dog and cat areas of the shelter.

Next, the crowd moved to the front of the shelter to honor Jim and Roxie Anderson of Le Mars and their late son, Ed, with the naming of the new Wet-Nose gift shop: the Anderson Gift Shop. Jim and Roxie have been avid supporters of the shelter by giving of their time, talent, and treasure. In 2021, they were named "Wet-Nose Friends of the Year." Their son, Ed, was a friend of animals.

The Anderson Gift Shop will be open from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Saturdays, Dec. 10, 17, and 24. The store's focus is on cat- and dog-themed items.

The open house from noon to 3 p.m. featured tours showcasing the cats and dogs up for adoption. The shelter opened in November after receiving its state license in October.



Wet Nose Shelter opening
Jim and Roxie Anderson and their late son, Ed, now have their names on the new Wet-Nose animal shelter gift shop. Angel Anderson, top left, president of Wet-Nose Rescue, announces the naming of Anderson Gift Shop as Jim and Roxie listen. (Photo submitted)

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Please do your best to keep your submissions to a length appropriate to the space provided, for example, two pages, double spaced or 600 words.

You may e-mail them to pluimpub@gmail.com with "My Turn" in the subject line or send them to or drop them off at Pluim Publishing, 113 Central Ave. S.E., Orange City, 51041-1738.

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