



Memories of a Former Kid • 3a

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Search for birth mom, yields a brother

By Rebecca Peter

GARNER - Cheryl (Schlei) Farris of Garner was born July 23, 1951 at Booth Memorial Hospital Des Moines.

"Mom and Dad (Dale and Lillian Schlei, rural Klemme), brought me home on Nov. 7," Cheryl said. She knew from a young age she was adopted. When a school chum asked what it was to be adopted, she was told that Dale and Lillian got to "pick her."

"I had a wonderful childhood and wonderful parents," she said. "I just thought I was special."

However, about four years ago, Farris contemplated researching who her biological mother might be.

"I wanted to find out if there were any health concerns that I could tell my kids and grandkids. That's the main reason. Just to find the records and see what I could find out."

She was also curious to know if she had a half-brother or sister somewhere.

Then, two years ago, the Iowa Department of Public Health opened up adoption records.

Cheryl's daughter, Hancock County Recorder Tracy Mar-

shall, received the paperwork she needed to sign and send in to the State.

About 6 weeks later, Cheryl received a document stating her birth mother's name was Carol Schneekloth. The baby's name on the birth certificate was listed as "Pamela Kay." (Dale and Lillian had changed their adopted daughter's name to "Cheryl.")

Cheryl learned that Carol became pregnant at age 16. It was a time when unwed teenage mothers typically didn't keep their babies. Putting the baby up for adoption was the norm.

She assumed that her birth mother was probably deceased and found her obituary on a website. Carol (Schneekloth) Hankins had passed away on June 12, 2021 at the age of 86.

"I found out that she had died just two weeks earlier," Farris said. "I didn't know quite what to think at first."

The obituary included a photo. The resemblance between Cheryl and Carol was apparent.

"Since I look like her, I wish I could have met her," Cheryl said.

Carol Schneekloth was the

oldest of six children. She was married twice and she had a son.

Cheryl, who grew up thinking she was an only child, discovered she had a half-brother. John Priest is a retired truck driver from Shenandoah, Iowa.

Farris gave the funeral home her phone number and asked them to pass it along to John.

"I didn't know if he would even call," she recalled. "But I talked to the funeral home. An hour later, he called me."

She introduced herself and asked John if he knew that his mother had a baby when she was 16 in 1951. (Jon was born in 1953)

"She had a little girl and that was me."

There was silence on the other end.

"It seemed to me like forever, but it wasn't," Cheryl recalled.

She explained she only wanted to know of any potential health issues - heart disease, etc. that could be inherited. She also told him that she had seen his mother's obituary and learned that she had recently passed away.

"Then he started talking," she said. John had no idea of

his half-sister's existence.

After several emails and phone conversations, it was John's idea that they should meet.

Later during the summer of 2021, they met at Mat's Place in Garner. Cheryl admits to being nervous at first.

"I didn't know what to expect," she said. Her son, Cody, went with her. As it turned out, Jon also had brought his son along.

"When we got out of the car...they got out of their car. John came right over and hugged me," she said.

During that first visit, John talked about his family. He answered Cheryl's questions about family health to the best of his knowledge.

She learned that Carol worked for many years as a waitress at the Tall Corn Motel in Shenandoah. She was employed at Henry Fields Nurseries, and in later years, was a part-time caregiver for home-bound individuals in the Shenandoah area. She also enjoyed reading murder mystery books (something that Cheryl also enjoys).

John gave Cheryl an afghan his mother had made as a memento.

"Now when I call him, I say,

'Hello, little brother.' He says, 'Hi, sis.' No one ever called me that before. It's different for both of us."

Cheryl doesn't discourage others who may want to know more about their family history, but she does have a

word of caution.

"I would be careful. Be sensitive," she advised.

She likes the fact that in the process of searching for her birth mother, "I also gained a brother."



Cheryl Farris of Garner and her half-brother John Priest of Shenandoah pose for photograph after meeting each other for the first time. Submitted photo



The flowering crabapple trees at Central Park in Garner are in full bloom this week. Enjoy! Rebecca Peter | The Leader



Third graders from West Hancock Elementary learned about county government during a visit to the Hancock County Courthouse on May 3. Jason Lackore, county conservation naturalist, and county officers told about their respective duties. The class wasn't able to see the courtroom on the second floor due to a scheduled trial. However they were shown a video and learned about the history of building. From Garner, the class journeyed to Iowa's Fossil and Prairie Center at Rockford and spent the rest of the day collecting fossils. Rebecca Peter | The Leader

News at a Glance

Hwy. 18 RR Crossing

GARNER - Work on the railroad crossing on Hwy. 18 by the Garner lumber yard is underway this week. Motorists should be prepared to take an alternate route during this time.

GHV Senior Awards

GARNER - Awards and scholarships to the Class of 2023 at Garner-Hayfield-Ventura will be presented Thursday, May 11, at 8:20 a.m. at the high school auditorium.

Feenstra Traveling Office Hours

U.S. Rep. Randy Feenstra (R-Hull) announced that his office will hold spring traveling office hours this May. Representatives from Feenstra's office will be in 18 counties with casework relating to passports, veterans' benefits, IRS issues, and other federal programs.

A representative from Congressmen Feenstra's office will be in Hancock County on Thursday, May 25, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Garner Chamber of Commerce, 485 State Street.

Britt City Council appoints new member

By Rebecca Peter

The Britt city council had a lengthy agenda on May 2, including the appointment of a new member to the council and several public hearings.

Abby Post was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Chad Luecht who resigned in April. The term expires at the end of 2023.

The oath of office was administered to Post at the May meeting.

Public Hearings
Several public hearings on various matters were held with no written comments or objections.

The sale of property at 585 6th Ave. SE to Sandy and Joel Garza was approved. The Garzas agreed to pay \$1,500

plus publication costs to the city.

Heartland Asphalt was awarded the bid for a paving project on 2nd Street SW.

Heartland's bid of \$173,636.65 was one of two bids received on the project, according to Wes Brown, project engineer from Bolton & Menk. The bid came under the engineer's estimate of \$185,000. The city also received a bid of \$220,099 from Black Top Services.

The first reading of an amendment to Ordinance 514 to increase residential and commercial water rates by 3 percent annually starting July 1, 2023, was held. A second reading will be on the June agenda.

The council approved var-

ious budget amendments to the budget for FY23 as presented by City Clerk Elizabeth Ibarra. The amendments are due to increases to employee health insurance, liability insurance and employee salaries.

In other matters:

The council heard monthly reports from the following department heads: librarian Linda Friedow, public works Director Vance Hagen, Police Chief Mark Anderson, Fire Chief Jon Swenson, Zoning Administrator Mike Boomgard.

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Solid waste collection fee going up at Klemme

By Rebecca Peter

KLEMME - The second reading of an ordinance to an increase in the monthly fee for solid waste collection by \$6.20 was held at the May 1 Klemme City Council meeting.

The current monthly garbage, recycling, and landfill costs are \$13.80.

It was noted at the April meeting, that the city has not increased our rates for several years and recent fuel cost and yearly cost of living increases have made it necessary for us to adjust rates. Waste Management is the service provider for the City of Klemme

The third and final reading of the amendment to Ordinance No. 243 will be at the June meeting.

In his monthly report, Ken Weiland, public works director, noted that he has work on dredging the storm sewer system.

The paint for pavement markings along Klemme's main street is in, but Weiland was unsure when Iowa Striping can get the job done.

Clean-Up Day

This Saturday, May 13, is clean-up day for the City of Klemme. Volunteers are asked to meet at the city shed at 7 a.m.

NEXT WEEK IN WEATHER

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Thunderstorms Hi 81° Low 60°	Thunderstorms Hi 80° Low 60°	Thunderstorms Hi 77° Low 55°	Showers Hi 63° Low 46°	Partly Cloudy Hi 73° Low 49°	Mostly Sunny Hi 78° Low 52°	Mostly Sunny Hi 76° Low 50°

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