



Apr 6, 2024

Vol. 40, No.12

Prairie Crossing Vineyard & Winery



Doug Gray and his wife Juli are the owners of Prairie Crossing Vineyard & Winery. It is located 3 miles south and a mile east of Treynor at 31506 Pioneer Trail.

This local business adds economic value to the area. It increases traffic coming through Treynor. People come from Des Moines, Lincoln, Fremont, St. Louis, Omaha, many states and other countries. In addition, high school kids help mow, help with harvest, and pruning the vines.

Kathy Luedke stated she works for them and it is a true joy. If Doug is in back when she is serving customers, she will grab him to entertain, answer questions, and give free samplings of new wines.

Doug stated that at one point in history Iowa was in the top ten states for producing grapes. Wine making in America didn't take off until the 1600's, and commercially in Iowa in the mid-1800's. The CB Grape Growers Association being a cooperative, propelled Iowa as a grape producer across the country.

Things happened later – Prohibition in 1920, and the Armistice Blizzard in 1940 destroyed vines in the Midwest. The introduction of herbicides on crops surrounding vineyards also had an impact. Government subsidies and programs don't apply to grape growers. The local tornado in 2022 did some damage to vines. It takes 3-4 years for vines to grow back.

Doug stated the process of making wine is basically: Grow, pick and press. Separate juice in barrels to keep some back as a back sweetener. Ferment the rest. No matter how sweet the grape is, everything fermented is dry tasting. To make it heavier and dryer, tannins can be used. To make it sweeter, cane sugar can be used. It is an art. The same type of wines can taste different from

winery to winery across the state. Approximately 2000 gallons total wine will be produced at Prairie Crossing this year.

Each vineyard may grow different grapes and wineries get different grapes from other vineyards. Doug likes to play with blending wines. Once the wine is fermented it is versatile. He can add juices to create what he wants. He likes making hard ciders with a wine base. He uses apple wine for the base and drink flavors for blending.

Doug learned the wine making process from Andy and Julianna Hrasky when he worked for them. Bench trials are used to recreate a new wine or recreate some from the past. The characteristics of grapes can change year to year which affects taste. Each year they save back a couple bottles of what has sold well to try to copy. A grape skin extract is added if color is needed. Doug is experimenting with aging edelweiss wine in an oak barrel. It will be very dry and feels it will be phenomenal.

Gray has also been experimenting with Frost Wines, similar to Ice Wines which are popular and expensive. Their Frost Wine sells for approximately \$20/bottle. Grapes on the vine are allowed to stay until snow accumulates and freezes them which ends up with a sweeter product. Normal wine is 11-12% alcohol and frosts are a bit higher.

Doug's full-time job is with Mutual of Omaha as a Financial Crimes Consultant. Juli's full-time job is as a Financial Advisor. He was ready to quit to operate the winery full time, but months after purchasing the winery, his job changed with added seniority and improvements so now wants to see it through. So they have placed the winery on the market. They are not closing but are gauging interest. All events will continue. This summer they will have music every other weekend, a Mother's Day Brunch, WineStock June 1, and a Harvest Party in August. They have a Grape Stomp with the winner who stomps the most juice receiving wine. They do dump the

juice! Quarterly they have a food and music event for Wine Club Members who receive a case of wine and tastings. Look on social media for updates on events.

Next week:

Mark & Joey Sornson, Sornson & Sons LLC

Famous Quote

“Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible.”

Tony Robbins

Meeting Minutes

Dale Willenborg, President, called the meeting to order. Fourteen members were present. Doug Gray, Tracy Black and Taylor Black were guests. The group recited the pledge and Dale Willenborg gave the prayer.

Jokes: Bill Vorthmann, Steve Chambers, Judy Gutttau, Gary Gutttau

50/50: Dale Willenborg

Attendance: Doug Dillivan, but he was unable to claim.

Birthdays/Anniversaries: Jim Clausen announced his and Diane’s 57th anniversary.

Bragging Rights: (Dollars are contributed to benefit local youth programs.)

- Judy Gutttau bragged on Gary Funkhouser’s years of sorting and hauling glass at the Can Kennel.
- Gary Gutttau and Jim Clausen paid in support of the University of Iowa Women’s Basketball Team winning in the Final Four to now play in the Championship game.
- Dale Willenborg stated a contractor friend came for two weeks to help out on construction projects and wore him out.
- Bill Vorthmann announced their remodeling project is almost done. They used Jana Clark Interior Re-Styling.

Business:

- There will be a board meeting and scholarship committee meeting after the meeting next Sat.

- Gary Gutttau, Treasurer, circulated cash flow sheets to the group,
- Today is when flyers will be put out to each home in Treynor along with the scouts distributing their food flyers.
- Two checks were given out to youth organizations from Can Kennel proceeds:
Silver Creek 4-H Club - \$584.20
Wrestling Cheerleaders - \$471.00
Tracy Black is a leader of the club and coach for the cheerleaders.



Tracy Black, Taylor Black, Dale Willenborg

Community:

- Mon., April 8 – Varsity Girls Track, Treynor
- Mon., April 8 – Solar Eclipse
- Tues., April 9 – Varsity Girls/Boys Soccer, Treynor vs. Underwood
- Fri., April 12 – Varsity Girls Golf – TRA
- Sat. April 13 – Treynor Prom
- Sat., April 20 – Treynor Athletic Booster Bash
- April 20-21 – “Clue on Stage” Treynor student-led production
- Sat. April 27 – Treynor City-wide Garage Sale
- Sun., April 28 – Treynor Farmers Market
- Sun., April 28 – Treynor Optimist Youth Appreciation Event starting at 3 PM
- All month – Shoe Drive – Donation Box at School (donate unwanted shoes)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Humor



I have a smart phone, smart TV, smart fridge & smart thermostat... I'm essentially the dumbest thing in my house.

CALENDAR

Events:

Apr 28 Optimist Youth Appreciation Event 3 PM
Zion Congregational Church

Birthdays

Apr 20 Steve Chambers
Apr 24 Linda Danker
Apr 25 Irvin Saar
Apr 28 Gene Seran

Anniversaries

Programs:

Apr. Kathy Luedke (1st/2nd Sat)
Jeff Jorgensen (3rd/4th Sat)
May Linda Danker (1st/2nd Sat)
Phil Waggoner (3rd/4th Sat)
June Steve Irvin (1st/2nd Sat)
Joel Beyenhof (3rd Sat)
Judy Guttau (4th/5th Sat)
July **First three Sat. OPEN**
Joel Beyenhof (4th Sat)
Aug Chad Guttau
Sept Jim Clausen (1st/2nd Sat)
Bill Vorthmann (3rd/4th Sat)
Oct Gary Guttau
Nov Jordan Campbell (1st/2nd Sat)
Jerry Hempel (3rd/4th Sat)
Dec Mick and Judy Guttau

Speakers

Apr 13 Mark & Joey Sornson, Sornson & Sons LLC
Apr 20 Melvin Houser, Supervisor
Apr 27 Tim Wichman, Supervisor
May 4 Christina Bateman, Faith's Friends
May 11 Susan Enewold, Council Bluffs C.A.R.E.S.,
May 18 Scott Rucker, Boys Basketball Coach
May 25 Joe Chapman, Girls Basketball Coach

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Dues/Donations/Flag Money: Mail to Optimist Club of Treynor, PO Box 354, Treynor, IA 51575