

HERITAGE CONNECTIONS

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Getting Excited About Peer Group

Happy New Year!! I hope that you all had a wonderful holiday season. Now that the New Year has arrived I find myself looking forward to Peer Group and I am really excited! We are just two months away from our annual get-together. I always look forward to meeting new people and seeing old friends at this event. I am particularly excited about the new bankers who will be attending this year. I enjoy being in the company of other bankers where we can share our stories and get new ideas for improving our clubs.

I am also excited about the educational programming that HCI will be providing. The task forces have been hard at work this year preparing resources and tools that they will share with us to help meet our needs, as well as that of our patrons. And, there will be great speakers who will be both entertaining and educational.

I am excited that all of this will take place at the Honey Creek Resort in south-central Iowa. I found it to be a beautiful setting for us to enjoy the whole Peer Group experience. I sure hope that you are getting excited, too. If you have not yet made plans to join us, there is still time to register. If you do, I know that you won't be disappointed.



Sincerely,

Jan Ruhde, CBCD
HCI Advisory Board Chair

P.S. Don't forget to like HCI on Facebook!

Welcome Our New PTO

HCI is proud to announce our new PTO - **Ozarks' Kirkwood Tour & Travel!** Joy Penrod and Angie Greeno run this family owned and operated company that has been successfully booking Branson travel packages since 1984.

"We are so excited to have this opportunity to sell Branson to bank clubs!" said Angie.

Their staff can assist with all aspects of Branson tours including lodging, shows, theaters, museums, shopping, restaurants and local one of a kind finds. Ozarks' Kirkwood Tour & Travel specializes in customized itineraries for groups of all interests and size: social, performance, educational or just plain fun. Reach out to them for all your Branson area travel needs.



Angie Greeno and Joy Penrod

You'll get a chance to meet them at the 2016 Peer Group conference. Ozark's Kirkwood Tour & Travel is the sponsor for the Tuesday evening dinner and plans to feature a special

evening.

Welcome to the HCI family!

Ozarks' Kirkwood Tour & Travel

Joy Penrod, Angie Greeno

Branson, MO

800.848.5432



Branson Belle Showboat

Take a Step Back in Time with Kalona Tours

The Amish and Mennonite communities have a rich cultural heritage that often is hidden from tourists. A tour of Kalona, Iowa, however, opens the door to Amish homes, shops and farms.

Nancy Roth of **Kalona Historical Tours** enjoys sharing the beauty and heritage of her community with bank club members.



"We offer everything from buggies to beer - and everything in between," said Nancy.

A favorite tour option is a stop at a buggy making shop. Meet the man who builds Amish buggies. It may surprise you to know just how many options are available on a custom buggy, and that it will take a year for the order to be delivered. "Every group that I've taken there has been thrilled with the experience," said Nancy.

Mealtime is an experience on

these tours. Meals are served family style in the homes of local Mennonite women who have prepared delicious homemade delights including a choice of meat, fresh bread, Amish Tapioca pudding, salad, noodles and pie.

Kalona is the quilt capitol of Iowa and you will have plenty of opportunities to marvel at the skill required to hand-make such beautiful works of art. Other interesting destinations include a local candy shop, a Mennonite woodworking shop, a bakery where the famous Kalona Noodles are made, a local brewery and much more.



Nancy likes working with bank clubs because they try to take their members to a variety of places. Kalona offers a wide variety of options for tour groups. Look for Nancy at the 2016 Peer Group conference, or reach out to her today. She'd love to set up a custom tour for your members to enjoy a step back to simpler times.

Don't Wait; Register Today for 2016 Peer Group

[See the Agenda and Register Online](#)

Member Spotlight: Sheila Smith

Shelia Smith is the Ambassador Club director at Heartland Bank (formerly Geneva State Bank) in Geneva, Nebraska. She started as a teller in 2002 and assisted the former club director, Alice Tatro, for 12 years before Alice retired last year. The bank leadership wanted to have a smooth leadership transition, so Sheila started handling most of the bank club responsibilities before Alice fully retired. She said she was privileged to have strong support for her club.

"I am very, very blessed to get 25 volunteers from an emailed request in just a few minutes," said Sheila.

Members of the Ambassador Club enjoy a variety

of trips. They have taken several local trips including taking in shows at a theatre in Omaha as well as a local Wine & Mystery trip. They also enjoy trips to other parts of the country and abroad. They are currently planning a five-day trip to West Virginia in June which was inspired by last year's Peer Group conference in Charleston. In August they will be touring Ireland with Collette Vacations.

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The Ambassador Club
tours the Canadian Rockies

Welcome Tina Goeske to HCI

You may have been hearing a new voice in the HCI office recently. Tina Goeske joined the team in mid-November. She is a huge Packer fan as a result of many years living in the great state of Wisconsin (even though she was born in Illinois), and has 10 years of project management experience.

Tina will be doing many of the things that Jackie Hilgert has done for us in the past. Jackie is still around to assist Tina with the transition, but will be phasing out of day-to-day involvement. Welcome, Tina. Best wishes, Jackie, and a huge THANK YOU for all you've done for us. You will be missed!



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