

Hilary Gietzen

Shearing Career

by Hilary Gietzen



Continued From Last week

When I went to his office, I noticed that he was operating on a very small budget. There was nothing fancy in the office, and what was there was old and dilapidated. I shouldn't have expected anything different, but to actually see it brought things to reality.

I had a good visit with the priest and some other people who were visiting with the priest as well. I was really enjoying myself, associating with the local people. I saw that priest a couple more times during my stay in South Africa, and I still keep in contact with him on a weekly basis.

I went back to my hotel and waited for my sheep shearing contractor, DG Snyman, to pick me up. Instead, one of his young sheep shearers came. The young sheep shearer, Marius, was very helpful in helping me prepare for the next week.

I anticipated that we would be staying in a town, and I intended to eat at a restaurant. Instead, Marius informed me that we would be staying at the farms, and I needed to bring food.

We went to a grocery store, and both of us filled a cart of what we would need. I was so thankful that this young fella informed me of what I needed.

From the grocery store, we went to the home of this young sheep shearer's family. His parents had planned a family gathering and a meal as his parents wanted to meet the American. I had a really good time.

In the afternoon, Marius and I took off for Philippolis, a small town about a two hour drive away. This is where I would meet my contractor, DG, and the other sheep shearers. My visit with DG was very short. I could tell that DG was concerned of my age and my ability to perform. I think that he was most concerned of my stamina to work with the boys. In the end, he was pleasantly surprised.

We packed the work van, and took off to the job site. The job site wasn't very far away, but it was rough gravel roads, so it took a lot of time. Perhaps three more hours. We arrived long after dark.

When we arrived the farm and the sheep shearer's living quarters, I was pleasantly surprised at how well kept and clean the place was. I certainly expected much less. This farmer had hired farm laborers, and their wives helped with the house cleaning.

The next morning, I was excited to start my new job, and was anxious to have a look at the sheep that we would be shearing. The sheep were very similar to the sheep that we were shearing in Australia.

The farmer had never had a foreign sheep shearer on his place before. He was interested to meet me and see my work. Of course, I had to open my big pie hole and say the wrong thing. When I walked into the shearing shed, I said, "Oh my gosh. You have my wool packer."

To back up, in the early 2000's, the USA was going away from the round burlap wool bags, and going to a square bag that would work better on the international market.

The machines to pack these bags were being used in Australia, but they were not portable. They were not on wheels, and they stood upright. Numerous people in the USA had attempted to build a portable machine with pretty much unsuccessful results. The only machines that worked were powered by a 27 horsepower gas engine or powered by 240 volts. Both would be unsatisfactory for me.

In 2003, I designed and build a machine that was doing an acceptable job powered by 120 volts. When my nice heavy bales were making it to the wool warehouses, word got out that I had designed a successful machine.

There was a guy from Montana, Mike Schuldt, told me that his 4-H kids wanted to build a wool press. He asked if he could look at my machine. What was I supposed to say? I didn't really want him to copy it. He measured and took pictures of it for four hours. Then he put plans on the internet, and labeled it "designed by Mike Schuldt."

When I told the situation to the farmer, he didn't believe me. He really didn't want to listen to anything that I had to say after that. At lunchtime, I asked him if I could use his WiFi. I went to my website, and showed him my machines. Then I told him it was Mike Schuldt that copied my machine and put plans on the internet. Then he went to his computer to verify who put the plans on the internet. When he realized that I was being truthful, we became good friends.

Continued next week

Minutes of the September 23, 2025 Morton County Commission.....

MORTON COUNTY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
September 23, 2025

The Morton County Commission Regular Meeting was called to order on September 23, 2025 at 5:30 PM by Chairman Boehm at the Morton County Courthouse, 210 Second Avenue NW, Mandan, North Dakota. Others present were Commissioners Zachmeier, Buckley, Morrell and Tokach and Auditor Rhone. Also present were States Attorney Koppy, Sheriff Kirchmeier and Recorder Seefeld.

Buckley moved and Morrell seconded to approve the agenda with correction. All voting aye, motion carried.

Buckley moved and Tokach seconded to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2025 regular meeting. All voting aye, motion carried.

Tokach moved and Morrell seconded to approve bills and payroll. On a roll call vote, all voting aye, motion carried.

Morrell moved and Buckley seconded to approve the abatements #7150-7151. All voting aye, motion carried.

Tokach moved and Morrell seconded to approve the abatement #7152. All voting aye, motion carried.

Tokach moved and Morrell seconded to approve out of state travel for Recorder Seefeld to attend the PRIA conference in Virginia Beach, Virginia, on Feb 24-26, 2026. All voting aye, motion carried.

Chair Boehm opened the Public Hearing on the 2026 Budget at 6:00 PM. The Public Hearing was closed at 6:02 PM.

Morrell moved and Buckley seconded to approve the 2026 budget with a total budget of \$36,225,071 and a property tax levy of \$10,804,792. All voting aye, motion carried.

Morrell moved and Tokach seconded to approve policy 800-003, Social Media Policy

as presented. All voting aye, motion carried.

Buckley moved and Morrell seconded to approve out of state travel for 7 Highway Department employees to attend the 40th Annual Local Roads Conference in Sioux Falls, SD on October 20-22, 2025. All voting aye, motion carried.

Tokach moved and Morrell seconded to authorize Auditor Rhone to sign loan documents for the following special assessment projects: Mantahni, Entzel 2nd-9th, Prairie Ridge Estates, Yellow Rose Estates and Howe'ln Wolf Estates, Special Assessment numbers 2490, 2586, 2589 & 2588. All voting aye, motion carried.

Public Comment period as required by NDCC 44-04-20.1 was opened at 7:52. There was no public comments and comment period was closed at 7:52.

The total of all county funds expended from September 12, 2025 through September 23, 2025 equals \$1,019,353.29.

A detailed list of funds expended by check is available for public inspection anytime during regular business hours at the Morton County Auditor's Office.

Morrell moved and Tokach seconded to adjourned the meeting at 7:55 PM.

Nathan Boehm,
Chairman,
Morton County Commission
Dawn R Rhone,
County Auditor

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