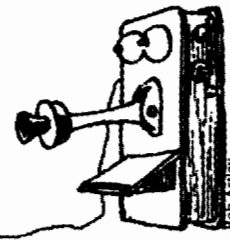


Peoria Partyline



connecting the extended Peoria community

Volume 1, No. 4

December 2005

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Peoria Partyline Mailing List

Do you want to be on our mailing list? Will you be moving or have a new address?

Call

Nicki Veenstra:
641-625-4244



A Facelift For the Old Farmstead (Part 1)

Just west of Peoria an old farmstead has been undergoing slow but steady change over the past couple of years. Things have been added, things have been removed, and just recently the big red barn had major "surgery." It's all happening thanks to a dream that Lance and Dr. Cheri Aldrich have—to see their little farm renewed.

It all began when Lance decided to try to straighten their smaller barn which stands just down the hill from the house. "The walls were bowing out and the roof was sagging," he said. "I suspect the center beams, which originally had connected the structure from side to side, were removed a long time ago to allow for hay storage." He brought home four to five good-sized cables and stretched them across the middle of the barn to connect support beams on either side of the open area in the middle. Then, using come-alongs, he slowly tightened the cables. It was a "click or two at a time" process which took most of a year. "We were able to bring in the walls at least a foot," said Lance. Cheri added, "It was a bit scary at times. Often there would be a lot of popping and groaning sounds when Lance would tighten the cables and that was a signal to us to stop fooling around with the old barn for a couple of days!"

From there the project list seemed to grow on its own. In went a window and a new door on a small shed they now use as a chicken coop. The old corn crib received a new roof, and an old cement pad along with several bits of old foundation were dug up and removed.

Work was also started on clearing an area just west of the corn crib for a future horse riding arena. It will be completed in stages and Cheri hopes it will be a perfect spot for all the things she enjoys doing with her horses.

By far the most challenging project Lance and Cheri faced was restoring parts of their biggest red barn. It has a huge hay mow so any plans had to include figuring out how to keep all that weight up where it belonged. To confirm their ideas, Lance called Matt Gearhart Construction from Newton to stop by and look things over.

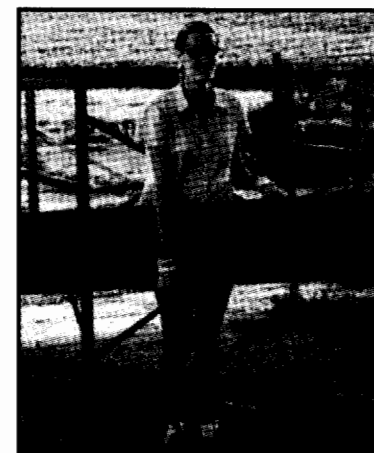


Harvesting the old barn siding.

The barn's south foundation was bowing and sinking into the ground which in turn was making the barn siding pop loose. Some of the siding was rotting, and a few planks had already fallen off. Clearly the foundation and the wall had to be replaced. "I give Matt credit that he was willing to try," remembers Lance. "But

when he told his crew about the project, they weren't so sure."

Lance and Cheri started the project themselves with borrowed scaffolding from Lance's dad. They worked ahead of Matt's arrival by removing all the old barn siding one plank at a time. Since they wanted to reuse as much of the old wood as they could to repair holes in their other barn, they were meticulous in their work. "We pried each board off very carefully," says Cheri, "and then we took out all the nails before adding it to a growing pile a short distance away." By the time they were done, Matt arrived to take over.



Busy stacking boards.

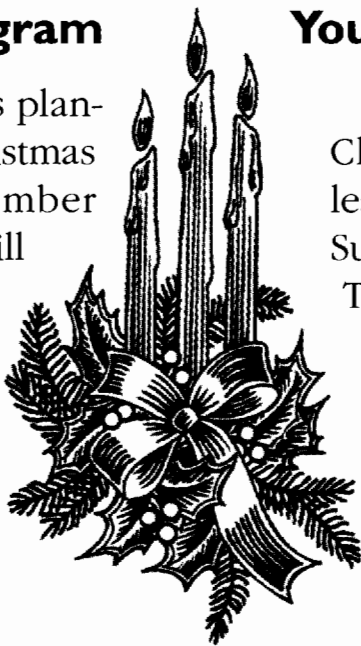
It would be a big job to totally dismantle an outside wall of a two story barn without it totally coming apart and caving in. How did the Aldrich's, Matt, and his crew get the job done? It wasn't easy, and one day a loud "crack" made everyone fear the worst. Part 2 is coming in the next issue!

-Doug Pleak & Marilee Vander Wal

Church Christmas Celebrations

Annual Christmas Program

The Lower Grove Church is planning to hold their annual Christmas Program on Sunday, December 11 at 6 p.m. The program will feature members of various age groups presenting special music. A lunch will be served afterwards. Everyone is invited to attend. If you have questions, contact Bonnie Van Wyngarden at 625-4471.



Youth Candlelight Service

The youth group of Peoria Christian Reformed Church is leading a candlelight service on Sunday evening, December 18. The service begins at 6 p.m. and will include several Christmas musical numbers being performed by the members of the youth group. Everyone is invited to attend.

-John Gorter

Fox Family in Town

Did you know that Peoria has its very own fox family? Patty Veenstra saw a lone fox leaving her garage one morning and Terry Bandstra says a family of four is living in the barn by his cattle feedlot.



The foxes were first seen on the farmstead just north of Peoria. When the Balmers moved in, the foxes moved to town. It's reported a few ducks and chickens have disappeared in the area too. Must have been more than one "fox in the hen house" lately!

-Nicki Veenstra

Peoria Feed & Grain: The Early Days (Part 3)

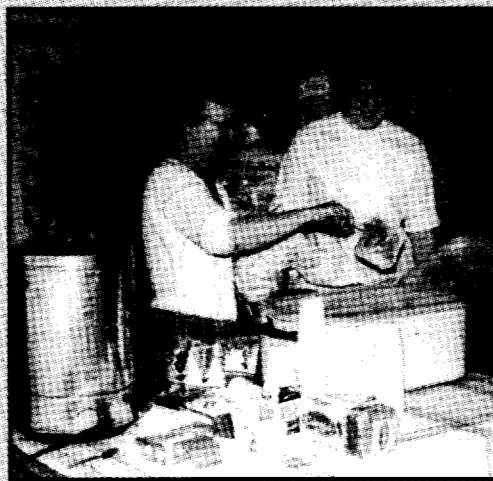
Once up and going, Peoria Farm Milling was a busy and happy place. The farmers were delighted to have a local feed service and the company's annual open house evolved into a much anticipated community event. Sponsored by the Rath Feed Company, the open house featured Otto Vos and his team serving up delicious Rath ham sandwiches and other goodies.

By the early 1960's, Otto and his team became aware of changes in farming that had the potential to give their company a whole new direction. More and more farmers were going to picker-shellers and that, with higher yielding crops, dramatically increased the need for local grain storage. Grasping the opportunity, Peoria Farm Milling became a grain dealer, expanding its facilities by adding an elevator and grain bins, changing its name to Peoria Feed & Grain.

Up to this point, Otto's wife, Ruth, had been the company's bookkeeper, but she stepped aside when it became apparent full time hours were required to keep up. Henry Vander Linden, a local farmer confined to a wheelchair because of a tractor accident, was hired. He added a lot to the team and helped Gene Roose keep the company profitable when Otto had to be away from the business because of an ongoing family need. Ruth had become very ill with Leukemia.

As Ruth's illness progressed, she doctored first in Pella and then Iowa City. Otto traveled with her on countless trips to the hospital and different doctors until she passed away in 1970. "Gene Roose took on a lot of responsibility during that time," remembers Otto. "He was very faithful!" When able to give his business full attention again, Otto rewarded "Geno" for his loyalty by giving him some shares and making him manager.

Otto was committed to keeping Peoria Feed & Grain growing. During the 1970's more grain storage and drying capabilities were added plus a new line of chemical sales and sprayers. Otto saw changes in his personal life as well. He met and



Ruth and Judy Vos prepare Rath ham sandwiches at one of Peoria Feed & Grain's open houses.



Over time, expansions turned Peoria Feed & Grain into an impressive elevator complex.

married Judy De Jong and a few years later Jeremy was born.

More happy years followed and by the time Otto retired in 1982, his dream from 1956 had grown to a business capable of storing over 400,000 bushels of grain and handling 3500-4000 tons of supplements annually.

"I could have never done it without the help of my employees," says Otto. "I just can't say enough about all those outstanding, honest, hardworking people—whether part time or full time! I never had to worry about them. They were willing to work and do their job very well. Most of all, I thank the Lord for being there every day and I thank Him for his goodness!"

-Marilee Vander Wal & Terry Bandstra



Christmas Traditions

The Thanksgiving leftovers are finally finished and Christmas comes bringing more food and visitors. Christmas also brings an important message back to everyone; it's time to celebrate the birth of Christ.

How we celebrate this special event is different for each of us depending on family, age, and tradition. Making time and effort to gather with family during Christmas is important to many. While some travel just a few miles or a couple of hours to see family, some travel much

- Continued on page 3



Kid Search Contest Has a Winner!

In the October issue, kids were asked find out who is the oldest person in the Peoria area. Names submitted were Tena Bandstra and Harold Pothoven. Spencer Fynaardt's guess of Harold Pothoven is the older of the two. His prize is a gift certificate to Smokey Row in Pella. Congratulations Spencer!

Did you know there are a couple of others in Richland Township who are older? Two would be Apollos Ter Louw and George Van Vark. The oldest person, that I could find, however, is Mae Vande Noord. She was born on January 1, 1911. That makes her 94 years old! Her special story is just below. -John Gorter

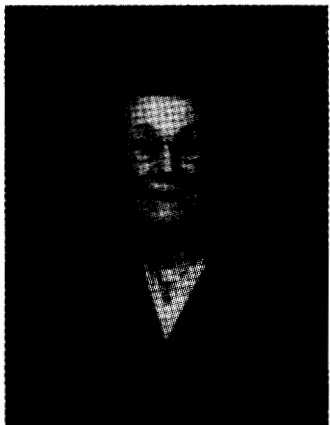


Meet Mae Vande Noord

Mae Vogelaar was born on Jan. 1, 1911 in Richland Township. That's a unique birthdate—one which always makes her feel special: 1-1-11! She was the middle child in a family of three with an older brother Elmer and younger brother Clarence.

When she was a teen, Mae's parents moved the family to the Monroe area. There she attended high school but later switched to Pella for her last two years.

As an adult, Mae taught country school for seven years in the Otley area until she married Wilbur Vande Noord. Home for them was the Oskaloosa area for 20 years. The last eleven of those years Wilbur began farming a farm just northwest of Peoria. That meant he had to



travel back and forth from Oskaloosa every day. When they were finally able to build a house and make an official home, they moved out to the farm. Even since Wilbur's passing Mae has been willing and able to stay living on that same farm.

Mae keeps busy with the Trinity Church where she is in a Bible study and Sewing Bee. Congratulations to Mae on being the oldest person in the township!

-Nicki Veenstra & Terry Bandstra



You're invited...

**Attend
these
area
Christmas
Programs**

* The Peoria Christian School is having an **All School Christmas Program** on Tuesday evening December 20 at 7:00 p.m. at the Peoria Christian School Gym. Everyone is invited to attend this Kindergarten through 8th grade program, and help celebrate in the Holiday Season.

* The Share N' Care Preschool is having an **All School Christmas Program and Fundraiser** on Thursday evening December 22 at 7:00 p.m. at the North Mahaska School Auditorium. Everyone is invited to attend this program and stay for the following soup supper and fundraiser to support these 3-5 year olds and their Christian Preschool.

Community Calendar

Dec. 11: Lower Grove Annual Christmas Program, 6 p.m.

Dec. 18: Youth Candlelight Service at the Peoria CRC church, 6 p.m.

Dec. 22: Share 'N Care Preschool Christmas Program at the North Mahaska School auditorium, 7:00 p.m.

Dec. 25: Christmas Day worship service at the Peoria and Lower Grove Churches 9:30 a.m.

Jan. 1: New Year's Day worship service at the Peoria and Lower Grove Churches, 9:30 a.m.



- Christmas Traditions continued

farther. Whether traveling or staying close to home it seems that the 'ordinary' Christmas moments are what counts.

Pam Vander Linden remembers a 'tough' year when "we got little Care Bears for each of the kids. The bears were different colors with different designs on their tummies. Each was wrapped separately and the kids screamed with delight each time they unwrapped one. This was all they received." For her, Christmas isn't about volume.

Sharon Blom remembers her family putting up a tree a week or two after Thanksgiving. "We were really, really poor," she shares, "but we made our own Christmas decorations—paper chains and cutting out bells and trees to put on the doors and windows. Not a very spectacular Christmas, but a happy one."

Decorating is a custom the Doug Pleak family enjoys too. "My wife takes great care in determining an underlying theme for our tree," he says, "and she sees that our kids display all of their special ornaments." He also remembers when he and his brother made a wooden Christmas tree out

of a kit. "We spent several hours cutting and painting this decoration," he smiles. "I suppose it kept us from 'snooping' for presents, and out of Mom's baked goods!"

Jim Bandstra recalls, "Some people and churches thought we didn't need a Santa Claus but my Dad thought it was an okay custom. He'd wear a Santa mask and would bring a suitcase full of presents. "With nine kids, a suitcase-full didn't go far," Jim chuckled.

He also remembers a Christmas tree with lights. "Just the old-style, like maybe 90% of other people do," Jim Bandstra observed of his family. His wife Tena still enjoys the lights. "She had ten candles to put in the windows," adds Jim, "and I'd enjoy seeing them when coming in the driveway on a dark winter night."

For all the different memories and traditions of Christmas this township holds, it's fun to see how similar our family moments are. I think Harold Pothoven sums the common thread up best though. "As far as Christmas celebrations," he says, "we do it just like ordinary people do it."

-Doug Pleak



... heard about it on the partyline ...

■ Business Services

Peoria Trailer Sales, Dennis Rozenboom at Peoria Repair, new dealer for Calico Stock Trailers, 641-625-4381.

VAN'S Electrical and construction services, John Van Wynn-garden, 1480-168th St. New Sharon, IA, 50207, Phone: 641-625-4280.

Tired of Wasting Hay? Call Dave Lovell about the Hay Miser. 641-625-4449.

Van Den Broek Concrete, Inc. for all your concrete work, Cornie Van Den Broek, Cell: 641-660-0109, or 641-625-4107.

Van Dyke Repair Inc., General repair on tractors and combines. Wayne Van Dyke, 641-625-4146.

CoLine Graphics, Custom Vinyl and Lettering. Call 641-780-4207 for more information.

■ Youth Services

Babysitting by Maria & Elizabeth Bouwkamp, 628-2781.

Babysitting by Leah Vander Hart, 625-4403

■ For Sale

2000 Ford Expedition, 90K miles, cloth interior, 3rd row seating, \$11,000 obo. Call 641-625-4244 for information.

■ Home Businesses

For all your Tupperware needs, call Becki Lovell at 641-625-4449.

Arbonne International New Rep. Sandy Vander Hart. Herbal based, pure Swiss - skin, body and health products. Home: 641-625-4403 or cell: 641-780-4403.

■ Farm/Livestock

Bird Dog Kennels, Rick & Karen Harrill. Available breeds include: Labrador Retrievers, Cocker Spaniels, and English Springer Spaniels. Call 641-780-4207 for more information.

■ Wanted

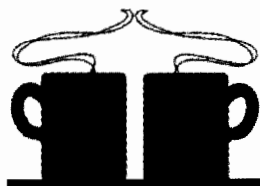
Loving and energetic mom/grandma to come into our home Mondays for 5 hours to watch twin babies and an 18 month old. Starting in December or January and only during the school year. Pays \$6/hour. We live in the Lower Grove area. Dennis & Janet Fogle, 625-4310.



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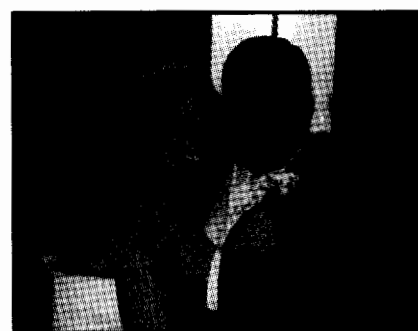
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Neighbors are much more than names!
Grab a cup of coffee and let's meet the Balmers.

What was a deserted farmstead just north of Peoria now has two new residents, Lucas and Jennie Balmer. They were joined in marriage on July 23, 2005 at the First Baptist Church in Pella. When deciding where to live, they came up with the idea to put a trailer on this old farmstead and make it a home again.



Lucas and Jennie have happily settled near Peoria.

Pella where he first met Jennie in an ag class. Lucas is a truck driver, traveling mainly to the east coast and Louisiana.

Do you know how many cemeteries there are in Richland Township? This includes Peoria and the area for a few miles around Peoria. Here are the rules:

- ◆ You must be in 8th grade or younger
- ◆ Email jgorter@lisco.com with your answer
- ◆ Also send your name and telephone number
- ◆ Send your answer in by December 31, 2005

We will draw randomly from all the correct answers. We'll then let you know the correct answer and who won on the drawing. Have fun finding out! -John Gorter

??
Hey Kids!
??

Public Gathering Place

Have you ever had a hard time finding just the right place to reserve for a family or friends gathering? Did you know the Peoria Christian School Gym is available for rent to anyone interested, and that you can reserve it up to one year in advance?

Rental Information:

- Gym alone: \$25
- Gym with kitchen: \$50
- Also available for rent: assorted sports equipment, a piano, a sound system, and an outside playing field (with or without lighting)
- Daytime or evening gatherings subject to school hours and activities.

For information or to book the gym, contact Kathy Rozenboom at 641-625-4373.



Jennie, daughter of Terry and Lona Bandstra, grew up on a farm near Peoria, attending school in Pella and then Central College. She works part time as a CNA at Pella Long Term Care and at The Comfort House. Jennie has started attending Indian Hills in Ottumwa to finish pursuing her nursing career.

Both Lucas and Jennie are looking forward to living in the area. -Terry Bandstra

