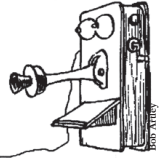


Peoria Partyline



connecting the extended Peoria community

Volume 3. No. 3

September 2007

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Centennial Celebration Draws a Crowd

On Friday evening, July 6, visitors began arriving in Peoria for a very special event—the 100 year anniversary of the Peoria Christian School. First on the agenda was a variety program in the Peoria Church. What fun to see old friends reunited, classmates exchanging stories, and teachers searching the crowd for former students. Many were eagerly purchasing anniversary books or looking through piles of centennial marked clothing for just the right sizes.

Finally everyone settled down to enjoy the program—a one-of-a-kind event that included singing, watching a skit called “The Way We Were,” listening to a poem, and enjoying a Power Point presentation. Viewers had plenty of chances to laugh at Dutch immigrant quirks and reminders of how things have changed over the years. There were also some sober moments as times of trial and suffering were recalled. God’s faithfulness and care was a recurring theme.



Rachel Ryken, the oldest graduate (center front), enjoyed the program along with many other friends of the school.

After the program guests were invited to tour the school, stop by the Recreation Center for dessert, enjoy the centennial quilt on display, and of course continue having fun socializing.

The next morning the school was open again, memorabilia was on display, the Power Point slideshow was available for people to watch, and the gym was open

for refreshments. That evening the steering committee welcomed 228 guests to a delicious tickets-only banquet in the Recreation Center followed by another program in the church. Towards the end of that program, two guests were specially recognized: Rachel Ryken, Peoria Christian School’s oldest living 8th grade graduate (class of 1922), and Godert Vander Hart, class of 1925.

This time there was ample opportunity for former students to reminisce and lots of memories were shared. Once again everyone had a wonderful time laughing together and praising God for His faithfulness. It was also a perfect time to focus on the future—what does God have in store for us as we go forward?

On Sunday, many guests once again returned to Peoria for a final celebratory worship service at the Peoria Church and a “wrap up” potluck fellowship dinner in the gym.

After putting more than a year into planning and preparing for the celebration, the steering committee was pleased with how everything went over the weekend. “In spite of it being very hot and humid, I would estimate that around 350-400 guests stopped in,” said Helen Roose. “We had a guest book but not everyone signed it.” For those that did sign it, the book shows people coming from as far away as California, Michigan, Florida, Minnesota, Illinois, Arizona, and Missouri.



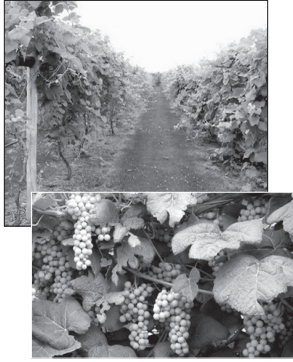
The banquet was a wonderful combination of delicious food, fun, and fellowship.

Centennial book, cookbooks, CDs and clothing are still for sale. If you were unable to attend the celebration but would still like to purchase centennial items, please give Marcia Van Gorp a call (641-625-4139).

-Marilee Vander Wal

From Grain to Grapes (Part 2)

Continuing the story . . . during dry spells, an irrigation system in the Engber's vineyard is set to water at 7:30 a.m. Each plant gets ½ gallon of water per day until a month before harvest. At that point water is withheld which results in an increase of the sugar content in the grapes.



The Engber's vineyard is kept healthy, neat and clean. A direct result—vines loaded with luscious fruit.

Plants are checked daily for insect pests, and a spray program is in place to keep the vines healthy and strong. When the fruit matures, nets are placed over the entire vineyard to prevent birds from eating the grapes and ruining the harvest.

Last year the Engbers sold 22 tons of grapes. That requires a lot of pickers! Starting in late August and extending into October, various service groups are hired to pick from 4:00 p.m. until dark. The harvested grapes are put into a refrigerated truck and cooled to 38 degrees. The next morning they are delivered to various wineries around the state. Some table grapes are also sold at Farmers Markets. Have you seen them in Pella?

In addition to their vineyard, the Engbers also have red raspberries, yellow raspberries, blueberries, and strawberries. They definitely have a berries and vines establishment!

Vi says she enjoys working with Larry in their vineyards, and especially loves it for making Jesus' references to being in the vine so real. "No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me." John 15:4.

You are welcome to stop at Larry's Berries and Vi's Vines (1155 Highway 102) most afternoons, especially in early September. It is well worth a stop. You'll see a beautiful, productive business in full swing.

-Doris Nibbelink



The "Berry Barn" offers visitors and workers a place to check in when visiting the vineyard.

Fresh Face for Our Cemetery

The trustees of Richland Township, who are in charge of the cemeteries, were contacted by an anonymous party who wished to donate the cost of a fence and new name plate for our little cemetery. After a lot of measuring, and checking prices and materials, the fence was finally installed and the new sign erected to arch between the two brick pillars already standing there.



A new name arch welcomes visitors to the Peoria Cemetery

"We've had a lot of compliments on both the fence and the sign," said Township Trustee Helen Roose. "We thank this anonymous donor for the monetary gift to fund this project. It helped to beautify our cemetery and the changes were completed just in time for Peoria's annual Memorial Day gathering at the cemetery."

In spite of heavy skies, a good crowd showed up on Memorial Day. Lawn chairs were set up and every one listened to an inspiring message by Pastor Ken Krause, sang several patriotic songs, and enjoyed a special number by a quartet.

When raindrops began to fall people moved to the Peoria Recreation Center where delicious sweet rolls, coffee, and juice were served. As usual, everyone enjoyed the opportunity to visit with neighbors and friends.



Quartet: L to R: Cory Warden, Ben De Nooy, Nathan Nikkel, Alex Van Wyngarden

Guest speaker: Pastor Ken Krause from Newton CRC



Neighbors are much more than just names!

Grab a cup of coffee and let's meet Peoria Partyline editor Marilee Vander Wal and her family

"I moved to Peoria in the fall of 1975 right after I graduated from Dordt College," says Marilee Vander Wal, "and I was excited to start my first year as a teacher in the Peoria Christian School. I taught fifteen students in the 2nd and 3rd grade and boarded with Bob and Pat Deur for a year and a half until I met and married Loren Vander Wal. Our first home was the little red brick house across the street from the church in Peoria."

Loren grew up on a farm in the Lower Grove area. His family attended church in Peoria and he completed grades K-8 in the big, white, two-story school that used to stand where the brick school in Peoria now stands.

Marilee's arrival in Peoria caused quite a stir because she was the first single teacher to roll into town with her personal

possessions as well as a horse and a load of hay. Local farmers' curiosity turned into amusement when the next spring the mare had a foal that Marilee didn't know was coming. The kids at school were wide-eyed as their teacher shared with them the news and then took them down the hill at recess to see the new arrival!

Leaving teaching after two years to be a full time mother to her children, Marilee continued to be involved in the Peoria community and remembers pushing the kids down the hill in their buggy or pulling them in their coaster wagon to the Dahm store for a few groceries or just for an outing.

When Loren exchanged his job at Vermeer's for a job

-continued on page 4

Peoria Annual Hog Roast

Over 250 showed up for Peoria's annual hog roast—an outdoor picnic behind the Peoria church—on July 13. It was a delightful evening of cool temperatures, delicious food, and wonderful fellowship.

It was also a great way to celebrate a very blessed week of Vacation Bible School which averaged 55 pupils every day. "We had a bunch of great kids," shared one of the leaders. "They bonded together very well and were very enthusiastic about learning about God and His Word as they went on a Son Canyon River Adventure!" The picnic followed a well-attended VBS program the children put on for their families in the Peoria church.



Everyone lined up to enjoy a delicious picnic meal.

What Are Your Christmas Traditions?

We'd like to include some of your unique personal Christmas traditions in the next issue. If you've got a special one to share, please give Marilee a call (625-4145) or e-mail it to her (lorenvw@kdsi.net). Please have all items to her by September 20. Thanks for participating!

Tips for the Week

1. To prevent egg shells from cracking, add a pinch of salt to the water before hard-boiling.
2. When flouring a cake pan, use a bit of the dry cake mix instead—no white mess on the outside of the cake!

Peoria's Other School

Did you know that for around 28 years Peoria had two schools? Our community just celebrated the 100th anniversary of our Christian school, but for over 80 years our town also had a public school.

Richland township's first school opened in 1846. It was a log cabin with room for 10-12 students. In 1856 native lumber was hauled from Keokuk and a more permanent building was erected on the lower east side of Peoria. Similar to many other country schools during those years, the building may have had wooden walls, greased paper windows, a fire-place or potbelly stove, and wooden floors. Students near the heat source "cooked" while those further away nearly froze. Seating was probably rotated during the day to keep everyone warm.

As enrollment increased, a bigger two-room school was built on the hill just south (across the road) from the present cemetery in 1878. Three sessions were held: fall, winter, and spring. Enrollment hit an all time high in 1888 with 130 pupils. More than likely the school employed two teachers until enrollment dropped and only one was needed.



The Peoria public school as it stood for over 80 years serving the community of Richland Township.

Esther (Grootveld) De Zwarte, one of Peoria public school's last teachers, remembers how things were over 70 years ago. "Our school always held an annual Spelling Bee," she says. "We met in Peoria's Town Hall and contestants came from country schools all around."

She also remembers the 8th graders taking their exams in the Town Hall, the second classroom serving as a "rainy day" play area when enrollment dwindled, and wonderful patriotic Memorial Day programs held at the Methodist church across the road. "We teachers would prepare the program for the children," she remembers, "and there was always a lot of singing and poetic recitations." At the end of

the program the children would carry flags throughout the cemetery to decorate the graves.

When she was teaching in Peoria, Esther would have an older sister bring her from Pella to Peoria on Monday mornings. Arriving around eight, she hurried to get her room ready. In cold weather that meant putting wood in the stove and setting out supplies for the day. As soon as the boys arrived, two were sent to a nearby neighbor for a couple of buckets of water. It was poured into a stone jar at school so the children would have water to drink. There was no running water in the school which also meant outdoor facilities.

"Classes started at 9:00 with a pledge of allegiance to the flag," Esther recalls. "Then we recited the Lord's Prayer." The rest of the day she divided her time between each of the different grades while the others studied.

About once a month the County Superintendent visited the school. He was responsible for choosing the material being taught, and needed to check if it was being used properly and at the right grade level. "Our school also had directors who would help with the needs of the school," says Esther. "They made sure there was an ample supply of firewood, arranged for neighbors to share water, and helped find temporary housing for the teachers."

"During the week I boarded with the Paul Nieuwsma family right in Peoria," recalls Esther. "I ate supper and breakfast with them but brought a sack lunch for dinner. On Friday night my sister would pick me up and take me back home to Pella. The last Friday of the month I would get a check for \$55."

It has been said that when the Peoria Christian School burned down, students from there attended the public school for a time. Whether this is true we do not know. There is no mention of this happening in any of the Christian school's records.

Exactly when the Peoria public school closed is uncertain. One source puts it in 1935 while others say 1938. Equally uncertain is what happened to the schoolhouse. It is assumed that it was eventually torn down. Some who grew up in Peoria can remember playing in the old building as kids.

-Terry Bandstra and Marilee Vander Wal



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

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- Vander Wals continued

with a Vermeer dealership in south Florida, the family moved to Lake Worth in 1983. Julia was born and Marilee began to teach again—this time homeschooling her own children.

During their years in Florida the family was introduced to Wycliffe Bible Translators and in 1990 they exchanged their home and job in Florida for a new ministry as support workers for Wycliffe Bible Translators in Papua New Guinea.



Clockwise: Loren, Jenae, Julia, and Marilee

As their children reached college age Loren and Marilee sensed their responsibilities lay with meeting the changing needs of their family. They returned to the United States and finally to the Pella area in 1999. Eventually they were able to purchase a parcel of land from Loren's grandparents and built a new home just west of Peoria.

Today Loren works at Pella Implement and Marilee works part-time at Pella Regional Health as an office assistant/tech in the Cardiac Services Department. Loren is involved in the Red Rock Threshers Tractor Club and enjoys opportunities to get out his restored Farmall "H" tractor as often as possible.

The Vander Wal's son Jonathan is married and serving Wycliffe Bible Translators with his wife Trista and daughter Anya, in Congo, Africa. Daughter Joy is also married. She, husband Jordan Roose, and their little sons Timothy and Arie live just across the road from Loren and Marilee. Jenae is married to David Van Ee and they live in Orlando, Florida. Julia just graduated from college and is going to pursue further education in the medical field.

-Marilee Vander Wal

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

Do you need scrapbooking supplies or assistance? Creative Memories consultant Tammy Veenstra is here to help. Call 641-780-2885.

Peoria Trailer Sales, Dennis Rozenboom at Peoria Repair, is now selling H & H and Calico Stock Trailers, 641-625-4381.

Avoidable

What a bullfighter tries to do.



Grandma's Apron

A long time ago many Grandmas wore aprons. Of course they wore it to keep their clothes clean, but an apron was good for so much more!

It was a potholder for taking hot pans from the oven and a soft "hanky" for drying children's tears. It became a "basket" when carrying eggs from the chicken house, fresh produce from the garden, or chips and kindling wood for the kitchen stove.

After peas were shelled, the apron carried the hulls back outside, and in the fall it helped gather apples, freshly dug

potatoes, or nuts for winter storage.

It wiped a sweaty brow that had been bent over the cook stove all morning, served as a "shawl" on cold mornings, and quickly dusted furniture when company arrived unexpectedly.

It served as a "signal" to the men folk out in the field that dinner was ready, as a hiding place for shy children to hide, and even (when placed over the head) as a private place to think, pray, or shed a private tear or two.

Yes—the apron was a wonderful invention!

-author unknown



In Memory

Melvin Deur came to the Peoria area as a child when his father was a principal in the Peoria Christian School. He graduated from the Peoria Christian Grade School.

After serving in the army and then getting married and having a family, Mel was a part of the Peoria Stockyards trucking business for 35 years. Mel made profession of his faith at the Peoria Christian Reformed Church in Peoria, Iowa. With God's blessing, Mel was able to maintain a continuous walk with the Lord. He always said that four things sustained him—his faith, his family, his friends, and of course food.



New Babies



Dr. Craig and Angie Whittenberg welcomed little Rebekah Jane to their busy household on June 5. She weighed 7 lbs. 5 oz. and was 19½ inches long.



Zach and Charissa Vander Linden rejoiced with the birth of little Hunter Jay, on July 2, 2007 at 5:28 a.m. He weighed 8 lbs. 2.7 oz. and was 20 ¼ inches long.



Ron Van Vark and Michelle Vitullo were blessed with the birth of little Rylie Rochelle on May 17. She weighed in at 8 lbs. 6½ ounces and was 20 ½ inches tall.

Congratulations to all the families who had new babies!

Happy Thanksgiving!

Nov. 22: Thanksgiving service at the Peoria Church at 9:30 a.m.