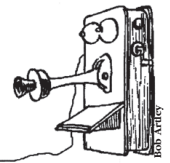


Peoria Partyline



connecting the extended Peoria community

Volume 4. No. 3

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Feedback on the Flood of '08

It was more than a distant memory for Iowans. We had seen all of this before—just 15 years ago. Rain, rising water, ruptured dikes, and ruined crops all began to point ominously towards another flood of history-making proportions. Our own Buckley Creek and Skunk River made a grand statement by running bank full and then overflowing into two vast lakes on either side of our trip through the river bottom. Curiosity and caution vied for our attention as we maneuvered what had become a road on top of a dam.



The river bottom flooded, closing roads and turning part of Richland Township into two giant, but scenic lakes for a brief period of time. Top: Some of the water even lapped at the buildings on Keith Van Ee's farm.

Naturally the sight of such flooding began to bring out the stories. Was it as bad as '93? Ernie Roose, who watched several of his fields go under when the dike broke on June 3, doesn't think so. "In '93 the water stayed on the ground much longer," he said, "because it just kept raining. In fact the Buckley came out several times that year." One time in '93 he and his family had to hike over the fields to get to their home because so many roads were closed due to the flood.

Jim DeBruin had a fence line nearly disappear because of silted sand in the bottom near him. "It looked like a snow drift and you could easily walk across the top of the fence," he said. "I don't recall that happening in '93."

"Water was coming over 80 % of my dike this year," said Marty Vander Molen, "and that has never happened before. But in '93 my dike broke and the water cut a 300 foot path through one of my fields. It was big enough that it took two bulldozers several days to fill it in."

Sammy Schmidt thinks '93 was worse. "This year's flood water stayed about a foot below the high water mark of '93," he said. "We could compare because of a mark we put on a cabin back then."

"The '08 flood caused a lot of damage to growing crops and cropland," comments Jon Nibbelink. "In fact this

year's flood may end up being more costly because corn and soybeans are worth more."

Keith Van Ee thought the river was higher in 93. "We had 4 inches of water on our driveway that year," he said. "About a foot more than this year." And Bryce Arkema commented on the amount of wood left behind on the bottom after the water receded. "I think it exceeded what was deposited in '93," he said.

-Terry Bandstra & Marilee Vander Wal



A huge hole, carved out by flood water, forced the county to temporarily close this bridge on Cordova Ave.

Bridge Out

Cordova Avenue, north of the Buckley Creek bridge, has been extraordinarily quiet lately—at least that's what people who live out there are saying. Unfortunately the lull in traffic isn't due to some new ordinance or travelers finding a better route. It's because traffic can't get through!

There is a bridge out just north of Lawrence Roose's farm, near the highway. As with so many other road problems in Iowa this summer, the '08 flood is to blame.

The bridge has been showing signs of distress for a long time. Initial attention included replacing pilings under the bridge—but the old rotted pilings were left in as well. Debris from heavy rains washed downstream, collected against the pilings, dammed the creek, and created a huge hole when the water cut a new channel.

Emergency rock was dumped in the hole, but the next heavy rain washed it away as well—leaving an even bigger hole. In spite of more attempts to fill the hole, the bridge remains closed. The county has funds allocated to repair it this summer. Lawrence and Helen Roose are eager for things to get back to normal.

-Doris Nibbelink

Homeschooling Eight (part I)

If it were just eight children—ranging in age from teenagers to 1 years old—with their many needs, activities and sports, the home of Craig and Angie Wittenberg would be a lively place indeed. But it's so much more than that. They also are teaching their own children. The Wittenbergs have been homeschooling for many years. They were introduced to it when they lived in Rockford, Illinois, and had friends who homeschooled. With their encouragement, Craig and Angie began teaching their oldest son, Zach, when he was in preschool.

After moving to Pella in 1994, they continued homeschooling Zach. Once again they found the support of friends who also homeschooled, and about the time Zach was in kindergarten, a homeschooling support group, of about 15 families, started up in the area.

This group has now grown to include 70 families in Pella and the surrounding area. It provides support and wide variety of activities, field trips, etc. Recently the group has been coordinating "co-ops," where different age groups gather together for weekly study sessions focusing on a certain subject that is taught

-continued on page 4



The younger Wittenberg children get into their studies at home, where mom is their teacher.



"I was only about three or four years old when my parents moved to a farm west of Peoria," said Arnold Ozinga. "And then I ended up living there for almost 80 years! But that all changed when Ruth and I made a move to Pella in May."

Just think of all the memories that come from living in one place that long. When Arnold was 15, he remembers their house burning down on the coldest day of the year! "We moved in with neighbors and then found another house to live in while ours was being rebuilt," he said. He also remembers the 2 ½ mile trip to the Peoria Christian School when he was in gradeschool. "For awhile things were good when I got to ride in a two-wheel cart pulled by a mule," he says with a grin. "But that changed when the mule got stubborn and refused to go. Dad sold the mule and I was back to walking or riding a pony."

Growing up on the farm had its own share of memories. Putting up loose hay was always exciting because snakes seemed to enjoy hiding out underneath it. He remembers a plentiful supply of big Blue and Bull snakes showing up over the years—with some even making it into the haymow!

Another memory includes Elk Creek bottom. "We'd find pot holes with water and fish in them down there," said Arnold. "Then we'd walk through the holes to stir up the mud so the fish would come to the surface. Picking up the fish was easy after that, and sometimes we'd get as much as ½ a gunny sack full."

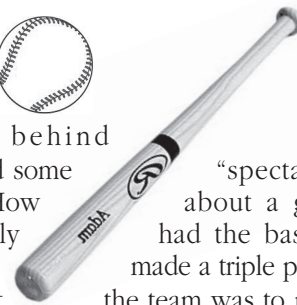
Arnold also looked forward to corn harvest. "We'd do our own as soon as possible," he said, "and then I'd go and help the neighbors. Aiming to pick 100 bushels a day, at 5-10 cents a bushel, I thought it was a good paying job."

In 1949 Arnold married Ruth Pothoven and they took over the family farm. "We raised four children in the home I grew up in," he said. About 15 years ago, when son Dale and family needed a bigger place, Arnold and Ruth moved to a house nearby and gave them the family home. About that time Arnold also took on the job of mowing three cemeteries in Richland Township plus one in Leighton. It was a big commitment. "The two largest ones would take me about 8 - 10 hours each," he said.

After 80 years, Arnold admits that it was hard to give up mowing and move off the farm. "I'm glad I did it though," he says, "while my health was still good enough to enjoy retirement." Ruth didn't find it as tough to move to town. They both agree though, that all the years they lived on the farm, they always had good neighbors!

-Terry Bandstra & Marilee Vander Wal

Peoria Stockyards Ball Team



It's 1954 and you've got a bunch of energetic teenagers on your hands who like to play ball. What do you do? Dick Bandstra had an idea—form a softball team to represent the Peoria area.

Practice for the season began right after 8th grade graduation, and in those early years games were played at the Lower Grove ball diamond, located about ½ mile west of the Lower Grove church. A right field fence served as a target for homeruns—giving many bragging rights that they had cleared it. Never mind that the fence was fairly low! In later years the games were moved to the Christian School ball diamond in Peoria.

A popular spot near the diamond was the pop shed—home to hamburgers, popcorn, candy bars, or pop—and someone would pass a hat to collect money to help pay for the lights. The Peoria Stockyards company provided 3 different sets of uniforms for the team, and men from the area—who came to enjoy the game—were recruited from the stands to umpire.

Sometimes when it was time for a game to start, there would not be enough players to field a team. Many players had to deal with “Dad” who would often insist that haying at home took priority to playing ball! Once again recruits filled in from the stands until the missing team member(s) arrived.

The Peoria team played for fun; however, they also really wanted to win. Games they recollect are ones in which they

came from behind or performed some the game. How in which Sully Peoria guys

One night it was almost time for the game to start, but none of the Peoria team had arrived. Then a 1952 Ford pickup pulled up and guys piled out of the cab and the bed of the truck. It was Peoria—ready to play.

Games were played in Tracy, Attica, Sully, Killduff, Leighton, Barnes City, New Sharon, Montezuma, Searsboro, Prairie City, Pella, etc. Sometimes there would be 3 games a week, and when it was tournament time, there were lots of late nights.

Players especially enjoyed playing in Leighton or Pella on the 4th of July. One 4th of July game in Pella had Peoria behind 4 -2 in the top of the last inning. There were two outs and no one on base. Then they started hitting. One player (who shall remain anonymous) made the first and last outs in that inning. Peoria scored 6 runs, and won 8 - 4.

So what happened to the Peoria team? As the players got older, married and had children, their priorities changed (or maybe their wives had some input). Anyway, after 20 some years the team disbanded, but many fond memories and lots of stories still remain.

-Doris Nibbelink



Compassionate, Caring Country Vet

Dr. B.J. Sinkler was proud to say he started his veterinary practice in 1927, the same year that Dr. James Herriot started his practice in England. No doubt he could have written a series of books too—full of stories about the farmers and animals in and around New Sharon and Richland Township.

Just for fun, we went out to see if any stories were still out there about this kind and gentle man. Here's what we found:

Doc. Sinkler was a colorful character and a good vet. He had his own way of getting things done. No matter how well you might prepare for his arrival, he would invariably change your arrangement. When he would come to vaccinate pigs, he'd find a place to sit and have the farmers bring the pigs to him.

He was also very busy. If a farmer called and he'd say “Sometime this afternoon,” what that really meant was from then ‘till midnight. If it was evening before he arrived, his wife would frequently ride along. One could never know for sure when he'd get there.



Pictures which evoke memories of Doc



In the days before cell phones, it was also a challenge to contact him. Once again his wife often helped to locate him as he made his rounds from farm to farm.

Dr. Sinkler visited some dairy farms over and over again—mostly to treat milk fever cases. A fresh cow would often go down within 24 hours after calving. It was important to treat them as soon as possible. Even if it was at 1 or 2 a.m. he would come right away, as cheerful as ever—usually with a story or a joke. If he bumped his head on a low beam in the barn, he might say, “It's good thing that was soft pine!”

One time a farmer had a cow down in the creek. Doc tied ropes on her front legs, a halter on her head, and then pulled her out with the tractor. He stayed most of that morning to watch her, and then stopped by every day for the next few days—just to check.

There's a memory of him coming in for coffee while a piano student was playing “A Mighty Fortress.” Dr. Sinkler, being of German descent, joined in and sang all three

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

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-Homeschooling 8 continued

in depth.

"Our children are also involved in many activities and sports," shares Angie, "including cross country, track, soccer, football, swim team, dance, band, drama, and piano lessons—all wonderful ways to get involved in the Pella school system and community."

What sort of resources are available for homeschooling? "For the younger children, we use a curriculum called ABEKA," says Angie. "It includes all the basic subjects. Then, as needed, supplements with online computer programs, videos, DVDs, CDs, etc. are added." It's through such supplements, that the children have been introduced to basic Latin and World History.

What happens when the children reach junior high and high school? Watch for Part 2 in the next issue.

-Sharon Blom

Enlightened

Perspective:

Being kind is more
important than
being right.

-Caring Vet continued

verses of the song in German.

He was known to hold a grudge against dogs who had previously bit him, and sometimes resorted to throwing a large rock to keep them at bay.

Dr. Sinkler would never send out a bill. When farmers would stop by to pay, he would just smile and say, "I knew you would be in sometime." He had a very busy schedule but once in a while he and his wife would go square dancing on Saturday night.

After he retired from being an active veterinarian, Doc would still sell medicine out of his house in New Sharon—and at a cheaper price than anyone else around. This might've been his way to keep in contact with his former customers.

-Marilee Vander Wal



Coneflower painting

Lifelong Artist

As long as Andrea Van Wyk can remember, she has always loved to draw and paint. "One of my favorite childhood photographs is a picture taken when I was about seven years old," says Andrea. "We had just come home from church and I was sitting on the floor with all my art supplies on the floor beside me."

She never outgrew that passion to draw and paint. After graduating from Central College with a Bachelors in Arts, she went to Iowa State and received a Masters of Art Education. Then it was time to put that education to work. "I started teaching art in 1984," she continues, "and never stopped. Today I teach art in the Pella Middle School—grades six thru eight—and a *Secondary Methods* art class at Central College." She is also a busy farm wife—married to Mike Van Wyk—and a mother of two.

Andrea's love of art goes beyond the classroom. She tries to capture the culture by painting things that are unique to a community. Old Pella buildings are a favorite subject of hers. She has made twelve limited edition color prints of the local area. "It's a way to preserve some of the 'endangered' local architecture," she says. Many of her paintings, prints and murals are on display in businesses around Pella.

Andrea is also busy doing things for others like designing church bulletin covers, doing the artwork for a Tulip Time Chronicle cover, drawing for the Tulip Queen announcement party program and painting the Mahaska County Court House for a tourism brochure.



Green steeple painting

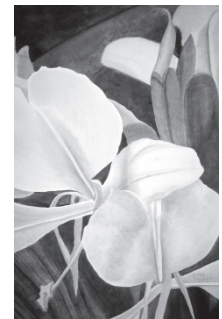
"Sometimes people will come to me with a photograph that they would like painted," says Andrea. "I really enjoy that because it gets me into scenes that I wouldn't normally paint."

"For those interested, my art is for sale at the Tulip Tea Room, Van Veen Chocolate, and the Central College Bookstore," adds Andrea. "One can also go to www.DutchMall.com and click on Artwork."

-Terry Bandstra & Andrea Van Wyk



Enlightened Perspective: Life is like a roll of toilet paper—the closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes!



Ginger painting