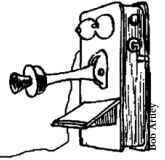


Peoria Partyline



connecting the extended Peoria community

Volume 6. No. 2

June 2010

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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
Helen De Jong:
641-637-4332

E-mail us
with questions or
submissions:

peoria.ia.news@hotmail.com
Online issue: www.peoriacrc.org

Peoria Loses Landmark

For many, the big white house—half way up the hill in Peoria—was a landmark as it stood proudly beneath two huge shade trees. Home to many families over the years, no one is sure of its age, but Peoria resident Ken Kiser says, “more than 70 years, because my parents lived there in 1938.”

“It was considered to be an old house at that time,” said Iris Vander Hart—another long time Peoria resident. “It’s possible that the house was closer to 150 years old.” Whatever its age, the 2008 ice storm and resulting death of the property’s two noble trees seemed a portent that “Lady Luck” was no longer smiling on the old place. Passersby could see that the property was not being cared for, and maybe they even felt relief when a “For Sale” sign was finally posted. Iris—who lived next door—noticed the sign too. She submitted a bid and it was accepted. The property also included a couple of apple trees, an old grain bin, and a chicken house.



Top to Bottom: Shed demolition, the house before tear-down, half the house is gone, finally only a pile of rubble is left next to the old stumps.

Once she owned the home, Iris felt free to look around. The old building was a typical two story, three bedroom house with a heating system that had no fans to move the warm air around. Instead grates and registers were situated to allow heat to rise from a furnace on the first floor. Peoria resident Bob Deur—a friend of Iris—grew up in the house and remembers that the lower register could get very hot. As a child he fell on the register and got a burn. He also remembers getting in trouble—as a child—by dropping a marble through an upstairs register and hitting an unsuspecting guest on the head as he was sitting in the living room below.

Iris—not one to tear down the old right away—took her time to decide what to do with her new purchase. Sadly things did not look good. The inside of the house had been stripped, the foundation was crumbling since it was made of limestone rock, and the cost of restoration would be more than the house was worth.

Finally a decision was made—to tear it down. In January her son-in-law Russ Fynaardt, along with his dad, Ken, tore the house down. They used a backhoe to tear it down in sections. The debris was loaded on a dump truck and hauled to a ravine on Mike Vander Hart’s (a son of Iris) place where it was burned. There is still some cement left which Russ plans to break up and bring to Mike’s farm.

“It’s a relief to have the house down,” said Iris, and she is pleased that everyone stayed safe. She has had the apple trees trimmed and tended to which will hopefully result in an abundant harvest of apples in the fall. Her family will also see to it that the tree stumps are removed and the ground all cleaned up, leveled, and sowed with grass seed. That will mean more lawn to mow but that’s alright because grandson, Andrew Vander Hart, is willing to mow it.

-Terry Bandstra and Marilee Vander Wal

A Rural School Story

Years ago there were small country schools scattered all across the Heartland of our country. A past issue focused on Peoria's once active public school, but for many children it was simply too far away from home to attend—even though it was in Richland Township. For those students, one-room rural schools sprang up. We thought it would be interesting to see if there were stories “out there” about such schools that once existed in this area.

Sheesley School was located on a gravel road—now Bayard Ave.—three miles northwest of Peoria. It got its name from the Sheesley family who lived one-quarter mile south of the school. George Sheesley was one of the early settlers in the Peoria area and word was the family had nine children—possibly a reason the school was started. The school opened its doors to students sometime in the mid 1800's and served the community well for many years.

Artie Van Wyk Van Zee and Elsie Van Wyk Blom lived on the Sheesley farm and attended the school from 1941 to 1946. Then, due to families moving away and other children choosing to attend the Peoria Christian School, the school was forced to close. A student body of three wasn't enough to keep the school going. In 1949 the vacant school building was moved to replace Flint Ridge School—which had burned—and the site reverted back to farmland.



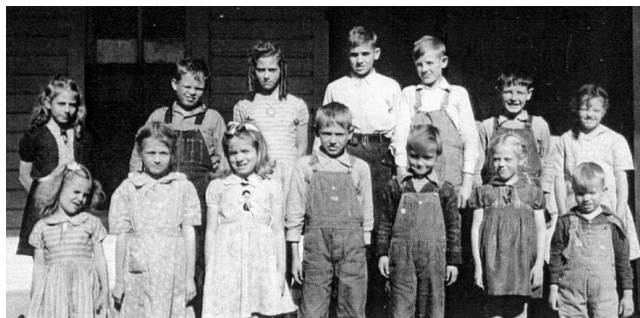
Sheesley School—a typical Iowa one-room rural school.

“Sheesley was a typical one-room, rural school,” said Elsie. “Some of the children spoke only Dutch when they started, and the teacher was responsible for everything—all subjects for grades 1-8, curriculum director, disciplinarian, custodian, playground supervisor, nurse, etc.”

A former teacher—Mrs. Elmer Vander Beek—

recalls, “When I taught Sheesley School (1942 -1943) it was my second year of teaching. I was 19 years old. Each morning our school day began with a salute to the US flag, then a Bible story. We had 14 pupils and all 8 grades, so each class was about 8-10 minutes long. On Friday afternoons we had Art which everyone enjoyed. There was a 15-minute recess in the morning and afternoon and a favorite game played was “Annie Annie Over.” During the noon break students enjoyed work-up baseball or snow games in the winter. If the weather was bad I would have to stay the night at the Van Wyk home. My 8th graders had to take state exams in May in order to graduate.”

“We have good memories of our time at Sheesley,” said Artie. “Memorizing the states and capitals, multiplication tables and poems; exchanging valentines; Rural Bible Crusade; dinner pail lunches; playing games in the timber; Kick the Can; learning lines and gathering props for annual school programs; reading all the books in our meager library; and waiting eagerly for the county librarian to bring new books from the county lending library.” It was a perfect combination for academic excellence, social life and personal growth. Children were taught to become good American citizens and to be respectful of others. “We appreciate that American heritage!”



—Artie Van Zee and Elsie Blom

Ah Those Bloopers...

☺ Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

☺ For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

☺ The “Low Self Esteem Support Group” will meet Thursday at 7 pm. Please use the back door.

☺ The Fasting & Prayer Conference will include meals.

☺ Potluck supper Sunday at 5:00 pm—prayer and medication to follow.



July 12-16, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.
at the Peoria Church

Theme: “SonCreek Junction” where children will discover five nuggets of truth for growing up in God's family based on the Book of Acts.

Ages: 4 year olds through those who have just finished 6th grade.

Registration: Contact Michele De Boer at 641-628-8315 or on-line through the church website (faithwebsites.com/peoriarc and then choose “Programs” “VBS”).

Pre-registration encouraged but not required.

Program will be Friday evening (July 16) at 6:30 p.m. followed by a community howl at 7:00.

Peoria Garage/Bake Sale

When: June 10 & 11 7 am - 4 pm
June 12 7 am - Noon

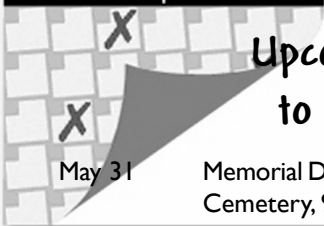
Where: Peoria Gym

Drop off dates for donated items:
June 8 (8-6) and June 9 (8-12)

- ▶▶ All proceeds for tuition assistance at the Peoria Christian School
- ▶▶ Left overs to be donated to the new Missions Thrift Store in Pella.

Want to help? Call Lyn Veenstra 637-2773

Community Calendar



Upcoming Events to be aware of

- May 31 Memorial Day Service at the Peoria Cemetery, 9 a.m.
- June 14-18 Lower Grove Vacation Bible School, Lower Grove Church. Program on Sunday, June 20.
- July 12-16 Vacation Bible School, Peoria Church, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- July 16 Vacation Bible School Program, Peoria Church, 6:30 p.m.
- July 16 Community Hog Roast, Peoria Church grounds, 7 p.m.



The Peoria Partyline team is pleased to welcome new team member/writer—Wilma Blom. Actually she has already blessed us with her talent—she is the author of the story we've enjoyed the past few issues called "The Bee Keeper." Wilma describes herself as "about as close to a Richland Township 'lifer' as you can get. I live in the house I was born in! Other than teaching in Illinois for two years and in Pella for a few months, I have always lived on the hill above the river."

As with many retired people, Wilma enjoys time with friends, family, and grandkids. She is trying her hand at sewing and quilting, but admits, "the quilting effort so far is just that—an effort—without the benefit of beginner's luck."

Additional time is spent volunteering at the hospital and the Vermeer Mill, plus sharpening her skills on the computer. We're excited to have you join us. Welcome Wilma!



On Saturday, April 17, a group from Peoria joined nearly 1500 volunteers at the Vermeer Pavilion to help the Pella

"Meals from the Heartland" steering committee surpass their goal of 400,000 meals—they actually packaged 419,256. Hurrah for all those willing workers!



Andrew Veenstra lends his youthful energy to the work.

"There were only eleven Peoria people," said Tammy Veenstra, "but we worked hard from twelve to two, and had a great time." Even youngsters like Jayden and Andrew Veenstra were involved. "I've packaged meals before with my students,"

continued Tammy, who is a teacher, "and at that time we even cooked up a bag so the kids could taste what they were helping to send out to hungry people. The meals are soy, rice, vegetables, and a vitamin mix. The scientists who created the mix aimed for a lot of nutrition but also food that would be gentle on the stomach of someone who doesn't get to eat very often."

Peoria also joined other communities, civic organizations, churches and businesses in responding to a \$100,000 goal

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The Peoria group hard at work but smiling because they are busy helping others in need.



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

Last September the Ethan and Heather Vander Leest family moved to 335 Main Street in Peoria. Their children helped fill the house: Zeke (7), Aiden (4) and Lily (2). The house will become a bit more snug the middle of May, when number four is due. The household includes their Golden Retriever, Fluffy; and their cat, Poppy. Everyone in this place is very friendly ... great neighbors!

What drew them to Peoria? Ethan liked the workshop on the property, which is heated. When he is home, you'll find him either in the house or in the shop, puttering around on metal or wood. Ethan grew up in Sully and attended grade school in Sully and high school in Pella. He works in the construction services of Sully Coop—and whenever he has time—loves to go fishing.

Heather grew up in Pleasantville and went to school there. She attended Central for a while, at which time she met Ethan.

Heather is a homemaker and enjoys a Coffee Break Bible study in Sully.

When she has time, Heather likes to garden and sew—a skill she learned from her mother-in-law.

Zeke attends Sully Christian School and Aiden goes to Creation Station in Pella. The children play a lot together and seem to enjoy having company over. As a family they enjoy camping.

The family is delighted to live in Peoria. They find it convenient to be near to Pella, Sully and Oskaloosa.

Welcome, neighbors! We hope that you feel at home here. And we will think of you as we drive around the curve by your place.

-John Gorter





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

■ Business Services



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

Skunk River Restoration Repaint all makes of tractors. Jim De Bruin 641-780-6114

Peoria Trailer Sales, Dennis Rozenboom is selling H & H and Calico Stock Trailers, 641-780-1886.

■ For Sale

For Sale: Hay, grass/alfalfa mix. Large rounds and small square bales. 625-4122.

-Meals continued

challenge to fund the “Meals” effort. Peoria Church raised \$1,500 of the \$93,000 that came in from this whole area.

Congratulations to everyone who participated. As a result, “Meals from the Heartland” will soon be sending a shipping container to re-supply designated missionaries and groups on the ground in Haiti.



Carla and Jessica Vander Molen and Gretta Veenstra fill bags with nutritious food that will be sent to hungry Haitian people.

-Tammy Veenstra and Marilee Vander Wal

What's a Township Trustee?

As a citizen of Richland Township I discovered at the last general election that I can vote for a trustee. What is a trustee? How many are there? What do they do? To answer these questions, I contacted the lone candidate on the ballot: Ken Vander Linden. He invited me to a scheduled trustee's meeting in March, at the home of Lawrence and Helen Roose. There I met with Richland Township's trustees and also enjoyed a delicious coffeetime.

Our trustees are Ken Vander Linden, Jerry Veenstra and Lawrence Roose, with Helen Roose as clerk. All serve four-year terms. At the next general election Jerry and Lawrence will be on the ballot. “What do township trustees do?” I asked. Basically there are four areas of responsibility, mandated by the state of Iowa.

Their primary responsibility is to arrange for fire department and ambulance service to the township. Because Richland Township is an equal distance from New Sharon, Pella and Sully, they negotiate agreements with each of these towns to provide service to different sections in the township. The village of Peoria is covered by Pella.

A second responsibility is to maintain the three cemeteries in the township. Plots can still be purchased at the Peoria cemetery—the only active one. Over the years many stones have fallen, so the trustees are checking into restoring them as best they can. There are also plans in the works to plat out the east part of the Peoria cemetery to the fence line.

A third activity is to levy taxes within the township in order to carry out their responsibilities. The mileage rate for emergency service varies from .45 to .55, the Mahaska County assessor determines land values, and the county auditor sends out bills and distributes funds to the township. An annual budget is published in the county courthouse and everyone has an opportunity to make comments within the next ten

days. Then it is submitted to the courthouse by March 15; and the fiscal year begins on July 1.

A fourth task is to settle disputes about maintaining fences. The common understanding is that each property owner maintains the right half of the fence—as you face it. The fence should be livestock proof if you or your neighbor have livestock on the property. If there is a difference of opinion about the condition of the fence, the trustees can be consulted. It is required that the issue be put in writing, and there may be a viewing fee charged. Such disagreements rarely occur anymore especially since



Clerk, Trustees (L-R): Helen & Lawrence Roose, Ken Vander Linden, Jerry Veenstra

fewer people have livestock in fields or pastures nowadays. “We do not settle property border issues,” Ken emphasized. “That is taken care of by the county.”

The township clerk is also an elected position. Helen's duties include keeping minutes of their meetings, handling funds, submitting an annual report on the finances to the county, maintaining records, and coordinating the sale of cemetery plots.

“What is the future of townships in the state of Iowa?” I asked. They speculated that the county might some day take over these duties. In the meantime, the trustees do the best they can to carry out their duties.

We thank you for your important service to our township.
-John Gorter