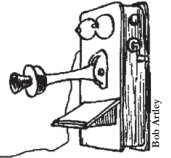


Peoria Partyline



...connecting the extended Peoria community

Volume 8. No. 1

March 2012

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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?

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641-637-4332

E-mail us
with questions or
submissions:

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

Cemetery Improvements Ongoing

For some time the township trustees have been contemplating cleaning out and shaping up the ditch on the west side of the cemetery driveway. Several years ago, the east side received such a face lift, and it all proved to be a positive development. A properly graded ditch allows for ease in mowing, and keeps pesky weeds down as well.

All it took was mentioning the idea to our cemetery caretaker, Kenneth De Jong, and he took it and ran with it. Last summer he began moving dirt, and—with the weather as dry as it was—had time to get it done by fall. He plans to sow it down next spring. His hard work will greatly improve the looks of the cemetery.



The dirt (from graves dug over the past several years) that was dumped in the west ditch, was done on purpose for this project. Now with all the improvements nearly complete, we may have to find a different place for such dirt. Ken has laid claim to the dirt pile presently there. “For a bit more landscaping at the bottom end of the ditch,” he says.

Be sure and give Ken your thanks and compliments when gathering at the cemetery for our annual Memorial Day celebration.

-Lawrence Roose

Larks Club (Part 2)

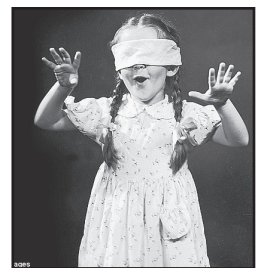
Yes, the Larks Club offered a group of Peoria adults an interesting change of pace. But their children took it to a whole new level! Winter time suggestions from their parents encouraged more civil play—like Bingo. But that was much too tame. In no time, Bingo usually gave way to a more exciting version of Blind Man’s Bluff. It’s reported that one young lady ran around the kitchen on the countertops to avoid being caught.

Another evening the hostess of the house had to call upstairs to the children to ask them to quit jumping off the beds. The lamps were shaking in the living room! Closets were considered fair game for exploration, and apparently one family stored extra boxes of cereal and crackers under their bed. I wonder if those boxes were still full after the kids found them?

It also is not a good idea to get too rough when playing in a bedroom. A window was broken one night when the kids were rough housing, so the adults all took up a collection to help pay for replacing it.

Lunch time was a treat and it offered the wild youngins time to calm down. There was coffee for the adults, and at one home the hottest hot chocolate ever, along with one sweet. Since there were several families, each family would only entertain once a year. “Uncle” Andrew Bandstra always carried a good supply of peppermints, which he gave to all the kids while smiling benevolently at them. I wonder if he knew that he was helping some of them cover the smell of having tried out a cigarette earlier that evening?

Inevitably lively discussions came up during the snack time. Sometimes it was “roast preacher.” Also, different political views were expressed, and although there were major differences, their discussions remained civil. Don’t you wish politicians today would follow that example?



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How Things Change . . .

Sometimes the Peoria Partyline team feels the pressure of getting stories from our senior citizens before they are suddenly not with us any more. That was true of this story. Doris visited with Jake just a few months ago, and we'd like to dedicate it to him in his memory.

Back in the early 1960s, many area farmers had a few cows and some feeder calves. Chore time involved carrying buckets of feed, or maybe first grinding and then scooping some feed from a wagon into a feeder. Baling hay and using a hayfork provided additional exercise.

Then in 1965 Al Trebon, a representative of the Badger company, talked with Jake and Jim Van Der Hart who were toying with the idea of adding silos. Al convinced them that building a couple of Madison silos and installing a Badger feeding system would make life much easier. The system required simply throwing a switch or two, and then watching feed transfer from the silo into a bunk. Cattle could enjoy their meal, and the farmer didn't have to exert much effort.

Mr. Trebon advertised the energy saver and promoted it to area farmers. An Open House was scheduled at the Vander Hart farm that winter and as many as 200 farmers came to observe. Amazing! Cattle prices were high, and grain prices were low. Several area farmers decided that instead of having 15 cattle to feed by hand, they would then be able to feed 10 times that many with much less exertion. If a farmer could make money feeding 15 cattle, think how profitable it would be to feed 150 of them. So, in 1966 several area farmers purchased silos and feeding systems. At that time some farmers claimed they would rather have a feeding system than another 80 acres.

Jake would caution farm families considering erecting silos to contemplate the impact of the original expense on the whole family. "I would never push them into it," he said. "Know that if you are going in the direction of bunk feeding cattle, it could be a lifetime decision. Will this benefit your family? Can you afford this expense?" Occasionally he would advise them not to plunge into debt to purchase the setup.

Jake's brother Jim arranged the sales while Jake learned to construct the feeding bunks. It took a lot of work to install a feeding system. A large part of that construction was pouring the concrete feeding bunks. The farmer purchasing the setup would often help with this process. Jake built forms in 10 foot sections, and the actual bunk would be 5 feet wide, with 8 foot iron reinforcement posts set in the wet concrete. "I remember more than 220 feeding bunks being poured for customers within a 40 mile radius of Peoria," Jake said. "The biggest one I ever built was a 250-foot bunk I poured for stock cows near Iowa City." The feeding systems also required regular maintenance. Jake soon learned the importance of keeping extra parts on hand.

But, things change. What happened?

By 1985, the farm economy collapsed. Many farmers also accepted jobs in town that started at 8:00 a.m. When their cattle were demanding to be fed on a cold dark winter morning, and the feeding system refused to work, farmers were easily convinced to give up cattle feeding. Occasionally, a silo would catch fire and burn. One evening, Jake remarked to his wife, "I don't remember opening the silo door when I left the shed tonight. Let's go check." When they got there, the dry and dusty silage on the ledges was smoldering. They watered it down and were thankful to have arrived in time to prevent a major fire.

Another time they were not so fortunate. Shortly after filling a silo during warm weather in October, a fire did start during the night, likely from silo gases that had built up or maybe from spontaneous combustion. It ruined the silo and the shed in front of it.

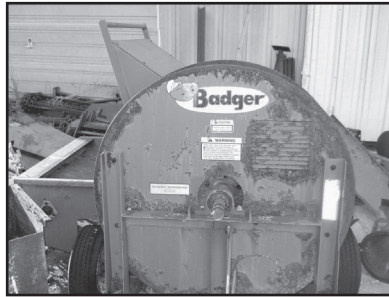
The equipment looked good and ran good when it was new. But moisture and silage acid destroyed metal, so the feeding systems started to break down and deteriorate from constant exposure to the high moisture feed. When repairs were needed, the equipment was expensive to maintain. About 15 years ago, the Badger Company went broke, was bought out by the Miller Company—who continued to supply parts—and was eventually sold to Val Metal in Quebec, Canada. Jake continued to keep many repair parts on hand. Getting the parts from Canada or from a supplier in Wisconsin often resulted in the cost of freight being higher than the actual part.

Today about 90% of the setups in our area are empty, waiting for the raccoons and pigeons to take up residence. The feeding systems are not used and are deteriorating, and the cattle lots are empty or used as a parking lot for machinery. Large feed lots have replaced many of the smaller feed lots, and are likely run much more efficiently. They are able to feed a more uniform ration, and also able to use the by-products more efficiently, such as corn gluten from ethanol plants.

Jake commented, "I enjoyed it when I felt that the end result made life better for the customer." He was thankful that during the 45 years he worked to install and repair feeding systems, he did not sustain any major injuries. One winter a ladder slipped and he pinched his fingers, but thankfully it caused no lasting effects. People occasionally still called Jake for repair parts, but were very considerate and didn't expect him to carry heavy parts to the top of a silo anymore. Those of us who relied on his skill and willingness to help in all kinds of weather, know that he climbed many a silo to help a farmer whose cattle were bellowing, demanding their feed!

Jake was thankful for the many friends he made over the years. Here are the words he wanted to leave with us. "Change and decay in all around I see. Oh, Thou that changest not, abide with me. Farming practices may change, but Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

Thank you, to a kind man for his many years of helping area farmers!
-Doris Nibbelink



In Memory



Stella Dahm was the youngest of three born near Peoria, Iowa, where she spent the beginning years of her life, including an elementary education at the Peoria Christian Grade School. After marrying Harold Pothoven at the Peoria Christian Reformed Church, the couple began farming west of Peoria, and soon two sons joined the family. In 1960 Stella and Harold moved to her parents' farm southwest of Peoria where they were engaged in farming, and resided the remainder of their married life.

Stella maintained a huge garden of flowers and a meticulous yard of two acres. The country side, seasons of the year, family, and the family farm remained very dear to her heart. When not outdoors, one would find Stella sewing one of many, many quilts which she shared with family and others. She compensated for her partial loss of hearing by writing her sons weekly letters, and connecting with her grandchildren and their lives via email.

Stella was a lifelong, faithful member of the Peoria Christian Reformed Church in Peoria and witnessed her faith through her servant's heart.



Jacob Van Der Hart was the third of eleven children born near Peoria. Jake, as he was often known, attended the Sheesley one room country school in Makaska County and often referred to those days as memorable. While attending a Bible conference in Des Moines, he met Anna Irene. They married and were blessed with one son, Donald. For a time Jake enlisted in the Army until receiving a medical discharge. Jake and his family lived and farmed in the Peoria area for almost 60 years. He and his son did silo repair work part of that time. Jake never fully retired and enjoyed visiting, reading, and studying his Bible. He attended the Hillside Bible Church in Oskaloosa.



Nellie Kathryn Van Wyk was born on a farm between Peoria and New Sharon, Iowa—the oldest of seven children. She grew up in the Peoria Christian Reformed Church. At 26 years she married Jacob Vander Molen, and they rented farms near Peoria for seven years. During this time two of their three children were born. In time Jake had an opportunity to start a small hog buying business and the family moved into Peoria when the Peoria Stockyards was started. As the business continued to grow, Nellie helped keep the offices clean, as well as maintain a large garden. She was a very busy wife, mother, seamstress and homemaker. In the 70s the Peoria Stockyards was sold and the couple officially retired some years later. Nellie still enjoyed mending and sewing. Over time Jake passed away and Nell continued living at various care facilities until she was called home the last day of 2011. She was just seven months shy of her 100th birthday. Nellie was blessed with three children and their spouses, 20 grandchildren, and 36 great-grandchildren.



**Neighbors are much more than just names!
Grab a cup of coffee and let's meet the Veenstra family!**

Recently, Jerry and Rita Veenstra moved from Richland Township to a house they built in Pella. As they left their home at 1338 110th Street, another Veenstra family—Jerry and Rita's son Darrell and his wife Angela—stood ready to settle into the big, familiar farmhouse. They moved in from Oskaloosa the day before school started for their sons, Blake and Trevor. Both boys attend Sully Christian school and are in the fourth grade and kindergarten.

For Darrell, this was a dream come true—to move back to his childhood home. He enjoys the open space and the opportunity to putter around outside. While growing up, Darrell attended school at Peoria Christian and graduated from Pella Christian High in 1991. Angela is the daughter of Marvin and Melinda Vander Velden of Pleasant Hill. She grew up on an acreage southeast of Des Moines and graduated from Southeast Polk High School in 1993.

Both Darrell and Angela attended Central College, where they met. Darrell graduated in 1995 with a degree in economics and now works as an insurance agent at Cook

and Son Agency in Pella. Angela graduated in 1997 with a degree in elementary education. She is now a stay-at-home mom and occasionally subs. "I'm still learning to like living out in the country," she says.

When I asked what they do in their spare time, sports was the predominant response. Angela enjoys running; you may find her at a 5K run in the area. Darrell likes to golf and watch sports; he is also the president of Kiwanis in Pella. Blake and Trevor participate in most any sport offered at their age, which gives their parents something to attend. The boys also like to bike and skateboard.

If you ever want to brighten your day, you should visit with the Veenstra family. They are cheerful and talkative. It is good to have you as neighbors. We hope that you enjoy your new home.

-John Gorter





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

■ Business Services



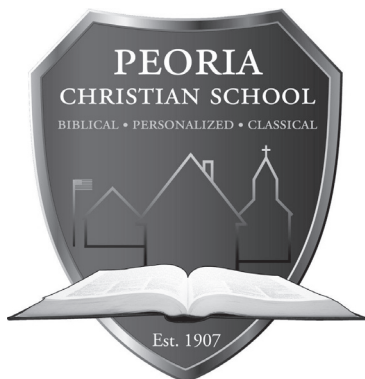
Van Dyke Repair Inc.,
 General repair on tractors and combines. Wayne Van Dyke, 641-625-4146.

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

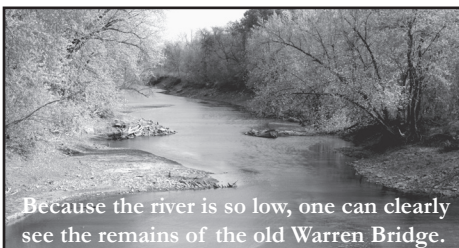
Flory Construction, New construction, remodels, additions, and decks. Call Luke, 641-629-0357 or 625-4240.

■ For Sale

For Sale: Hand-crafted gifts, deck furniture, quilt racks, windmills, and many other things. 625-4148, 1219 Hwy 102 (road to Pella).



625.4131 www.peoriachr.org



Country Church to Continue

Over 100 years of history will continue for Lower Grove Church. At their congregational meeting in December, they decided to not close the church for at least one more year. They plan to continue with their morning services and Sunday School, but will have no evening services. Pulpit supply will continue with various ministers and lay people. The feeling of family and service to the Lord will continue to bind this church together. -Sharon Blom



Donations Donations Donations Donations Donations

The Peoria Partyline is starting its 8th year!
If you appreciate the paper, here's what you can do:

Suggested \$2 annual donation. Send your check to the Peoria Church marked **for the Peoria Partyline** (120 Peoria West St. Pella, IA 50219)

Classified Ads: Contact Terry Bandstra for information: 625-4122



How was that again?

- To write with a broken pencil is pointless.
- When the smog lifts in Los Angeles, U.C.L.A.
- The batteries were given out free of charge.
- A dentist and a manicurist married. They fought tooth and nail.
- A will is a dead giveaway.
- Police were called to a day care where a three-year-old was resisting a rest.
- A bicycle can't stand alone; it is too tired.
- The guy who fell into an upholstery machine was fully recovered.
- Acupuncture: a jab well done.

- Larks Club continued

After lunch, the kids were invited to join in a second round of singing. It made a good chorus—and likely helped prevent further damaging antics. Marilyn Vander Linden remembers how that part of the evening gave her a very warm, secure feeling—to be with a group of adults who cared about each other and about all the children.

Two special events were always part of the club's calendar. One was an end-of-summer picnic at Lake Keomah. Several of the men even dared to get in the water—revealing some blinding white legs and chests, next to their very brown arms and heads.

There was also a New Year's Eve party. Mildred Bandstra sang, "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles" at one of these parties—definitely not a Dutch Psalm. And one man even got up, sang, and danced! What was the world coming to? Once on New Year's Eve, the children called the telephone operator and wished her a "Happy New Year." At the time they thought it was a really daring trick.

Eventually the club disbanded. We don't know when or why. We do know that each of their singing sessions ended with "God Be With You Till We Meet Again." We pray that is true for all of us also. -Doris Nibbelink and former Club kids