

Peoria Partyline



... connecting the extended Peoria community

Volume 8. No. 3

September 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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with questions or
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peoria.ia.news@hotmail.com

Online issue: www.peoriarc.org

Organic Farming Other Than Ordinary

Is that a group of Japanese walking through John C. Roose's soybean field? It sure is, and they are looking for something most farmers in the area could not give them—the perfect organic soy bean!

Popular enough to draw foreign interest to our area, organic farming is much more than offering a superior product. It is a way of life. Recently Harv and I sat down with John and his son, Mark, to learn about their decision to go organic.

"My path to organic farming began in the 90's," said Mark. "I had been involved in conventional farming since 1988, but did not find it to be very profitable, so I began exploring ways to cut costs. I started with banding herbicide in the row and cultivating the rest." This approach was so successful that he considered using no herbicides. Securing information from the Rodale Institute in Wisconsin, he slowly but gradually began the changeover of his land. He worked to certify one field at a time as organic. In 1998 his first crop was certified and in 2001 the whole farm became organic.

Organic farming is defined as producing crops without the use of any synthetic fertilizer or chemicals. When Mark began, certification came from the OCIA—Organic Crop Improvement Association. In 2004 the USDA developed standardized regulations for organic farming and instituted the NOP (National Organic Program). The certification

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Memorial Day



On a warm, breezy morning 177 people gathered for a Memorial Day service at the Peoria Cemetery. Included in the crowd was Morris Vos, who drove from Macomb, IL, to participate. It was like coming home for him since he was raised on a farm in this township.

Ruth De Bruin guided us through the service, which included a recognition of those who are serving or have served in the armed forces. Sherry Pfadenhauer sang a couple of beautiful songs, and Ken Rozenboom gave a meaningful talk, which included statistics on American casualties in our history. The service was concluded by a solemn playing of the taps by Marshall Fynaardt.

Afterwards cinnamon rolls and caramel rolls were served, along with orange juice and coffee. People lingered to visit gravesites and talk with friends and neighbors. We are grateful to the township trustees for allowing us to hold this service each year.

-John Gorter

Vacation Bible School and Hog Roast

The second week of July saw many vehicles going in and out of Peoria. It was Vacation Bible School week at the church. A total of 70 children attended the missions-themed event where a different missionary was highlighted each day. Cards of encouragement were written for missionaries, and the children were encouraged to show the love of Jesus in concrete ways. The 5th and 6th graders were sent to the Pella Food Pantry to organize their supplies, a neighbor's wagon lawn ornament was refinished, and small dresses were made by women for children in Haiti.

Every day the children enjoyed snacks, a time of play, a time of singing, and a Bible lesson. The week peaked with an evening program on Friday and then an outdoor hog roast. About 300 people enjoyed a delicious meal and wonderful fellowship. Thank you to the Peoria church and neighbors for making all this possible.

-John Gorter



Peoria Christian School Bazaar Nov. 2

Our annual Fall Bazaar Fundraiser will be an Under the Sea Adventure
We will enjoy: a Bake Sale

Browse 'N Buy and Gift Certificate Silent Auction
from 3-6pm,

Supper 5-6:30pm
Auction at 7pm.

Join us

Support the school!



Sarah Veenstra was born in Oskaloosa and grew up there as well. After highschool graduation she worked as a bookkeeper and office manager until meeting Wilbur who was a hired hand on her aunt's farm. They were married and raised five sons on farms near Tracy, Pella and finally Peoria. She also was office manager for her husband's auction company for 25 years. Both Sarah and Wilbur were lifelong members of the Peoria Church. Sarah loved to sew, bowl, golf, play Scrabble, dance and play cards.

In Loving Memory



Earnest David Schimmel was born in Tracy and educated in the Pella area. He married Zelda and they raised four daughters on a farm in Richland Township. David loved traveling and harvesting and canning applesauce, pears, peaches and tomatoes. He also enjoyed fix-it jobs around home and volunteer work. He was a member of the Covenant Reformed Church in Pella.



Harold Pothoven grew up near, and attended grade-school in Peoria. He worked as a farmhand before being drafted and serving in Germany during WWII. Upon discharge he married Stella, and they raised two sons on two different farms in the area. A lifelong farmer, Harold witnessed many changes in farming before his retirement. He and Stella enjoyed their later years, and were lifelong members of the Peoria Christian Ref. Church.

- Organic Farming con't.

process is still handled through the OCIA.

Currently Mark has 100 acres of beans, 100 acres of corn, 15 acres of alfalfa, and 15 acres of barley. Spring seeds come from a couple of distributors who deal in organic farm supplies. He utilizes a ridge row farming technique on most of his acres—which helps to conserve the soil—and cultivates three times a year. He utilizes a special cultivator with different attachments, including one that is used to create the ridges around the plants in the row. "We also walk beans," says Mark, "and have hired young people to help with that. We also have a 25-foot buffer—generally out of hay—that surrounds our farm. It acts as protection from spray applied to neighboring fields."

"I custom feed hogs," continues Mark, "and maintain some cattle and poultry—mostly for the manure. We pile the manure in windrows along the fields and apply it in the spring and fall." John—who learned organic techniques from his son—has also used natural micronutrients that he is able to get from fertilizer suppliers. Both men rotate their bean and corn crops every year, and use rye as a winter cover. It provides good structure to the soil and adds nutrients. Are insects a problem? "Generally not," says Mark. "Healthy soil creates healthy plants, which helps to ward off insects."

So who purchases organic products? "We market our corn to organic livestock producers, usually the Amish in Kalona," answers Mark. "With a bean crop in perfect condition we may be

able to get a premium price from foreigners like the Japanese. Otherwise, we sell via brokers, generally for bean meal."

Storage and transportation are basically the same as conventional farming, except that all receptacles must be clean of any crop residue that might contain chemical or synthetic fertilizer. In storage sometimes a natural product called D.E is used that basically takes care of insects by dehydrating them.

The Roosees access periodicals, newsletters, conferences and other organic farmers in the Midwest for information to improve their operations. "We've also had to learn about documentation," said Mark. "It is required for each crop and includes paperwork on each field each time a crop is transported, stored, etc. The audit trail is necessary to insure that food brought into a grocery store, for instance, can be traced back to the field it was grown in." Quality must be documented, and both Mark and John have their farms inspected every summer.

When asked about the advantages of organic farming, Mark replied, "The premium earned means additional money per acre." Disadvantages include factors out of their control—mostly weather related.

So why organic farming? Mark says, "I like the idea of conservation and stewardship, and I have liked to cultivate ever since I was a kid." John is a bit more nostalgic. "It is like turning the clock back 50 years," he smiles.

-Sharon Blom



Just a Barn—But So Much More



In 1920, on a Richland Township hilltop, a barn was raised. Just a barn, built to do its duty of housing livestock and storing the harvest. It stood watch over a yard for 91 years and ended up living a life of its own. Most importantly, it was a shelter for a variety of animals—ones there for a purpose—such as cows and horses, but also a magnet for unlikely visitors such as skunks, possums, rats and raccoons. Its walls also held a growing collection of memories. They absorbed so much over the years—the echoes of calves bawling, cats meowing, farmers talking, children dreaming and new baby animals entering the world. Add to that the sound of workers as they filled the loft with hay, the jingling of harnesses giving way to tractor engines, and the sound of brushes giving the old building a facelift once in a while. Over the years it stood tall as children explored its corners and played in the surrounding yard. If her walls could have talked I'm sure there were plenty of stories to share.

But, just as there is a time to build, there is a time to tear down as well. The old building was beginning to show the wear and tear of all its years in our wonderful Iowa weather. It stood empty and sagging, and its owners began to discuss what to do and when to do it. Finally, in the spring of 2011, a crew came and began harvesting the weathered and character-filled old barn boards. No doubt they will continue their story as someone else's chairs, tables, kitchen floors or whatever.

Then, like a sad skeleton, the barn stood naked over the summer providing some unique views of lightning, sunrises and sunsets. We all wondered when the fateful day of destruction would arrive and just how well it would go to pull her over.

When the day arrived, it was quiet and calm, yet the yard was amazingly full of activity. I don't know how many people actually showed up to watch her come down but it was quite the experience. Two tractors hooked up to the frame and with perfect timing, pulled the whole thing down with a crash and billowing dust. I wish I could say that the plan to bring her down was as deliberate as the plan to put her up, but I doubt that was the case.

After 91 years, the old barn was reduced to a memory. Its stories must now be told by those who hold those memories. Hopefully those stories will also give God the glory for creating a story as beautiful as this barn's, even if it was just a barn.

-Nicki Veenstra

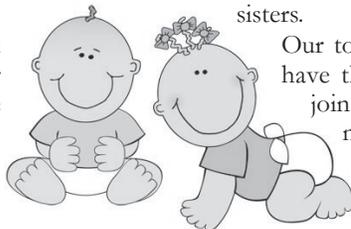


* Alexis Lynn joined the Pleima family on May 9. She weighed 7 lbs. 7 oz. and is the pride and joy of her parents Dustin and Cheryl and her big brother Landen.

* Luke and Jodi Flory welcomed a new son—Seth Edward—into their family on June 27 at 9:48 pm. He weighed 7 lbs. 9 oz. and is receiving lots of love from his older siblings Kaitlyn and Nicolas.

* Ron and Michelle Van Vark's

new baby McKenlie Mae was born on July 13 and weighed in at 9 lbs. 10 oz. After a brief extended hospital stay, the baby was welcomed home with love by Sidnie, Tori, and Rylie—her three older sisters.



Our township is blessed to have these new little ones join us. If you know of new township babies on the way, please contact the Peoria Partyline team.

Local to Run in Election



For those who don't know me, I'm Mike Vander Molen and I'm running for Mahaska County Supervisor. My wife Susan, son Ian and I live on the family farm that I grew up on between Peoria and Pella. I'm employed as a patent attorney for a law firm based out of St. Louis, but I do most of my work from home.

Things went well for me in the primary in June—I won the Republican nomination by 12 points over my closest competitor. Next, I will face-off against Oskaloosa Democrat Tom Rielly in November.

I'm running for Supervisor to help manage and improve our



county road system, to control county spending and to fully oversee all parts of county government. I've been told I would be the first county

Supervisor from Richland township—if I win—since someone named DeJong served 50 years ago!

Feel free to contact me at mahaskaformike@gmail.com if you have any questions about my campaign. And—I'd appreciate your consideration on November 6!

-Mike Vander Molen

Goodbye Gorters

The Peoria Partyline owes its existence to Pastor John because it was his idea to launch it back in 2005. He has stayed involved over the years, and most every issue has featured a story submitted by him.

The Gorters will be moving to a new ministry in South Dakota before our next issue comes out. May God bless your packing and travels. We'll miss you and your stories, John!

-the Peoria Partyline team and readership



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

■ Business Services



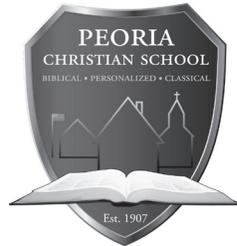
Van Dyke Repair Inc.,
General repair on tractors and combines. Wayne Van Dyke, 641-625-4146.

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



Community News

- ▶ **Nov. 2:** School Bazaar, Peoria Christian School
- ▶ **Nov. 22:** Thanksgiving Service, Peoria Church, 9:30 am
- ▶ **Dec. 23:** Youth Candlelight Service, Peoria Church, 6 pm
- ▶ **Dec. 25:** Christmas Service, Peoria Church, 9:30 am

Sewing to Brighten Needy Lives

Extending the mission outreach of VBS, seventeen ladies brought their sewing skills and six sewing machines to the Peoria church basement on Wednesday evening, July 11. In 2 ½ hours, using a simple assembly line, they completed all or part of 87 pillow case dresses for Haitian children. Other dresses were being worked on by ladies in their homes. A total of 150 dresses will be ready to brighten up the lives of needy children when the project is complete. Thanks to Tammy and Patty Veenstra for the wonderful idea and for organizing the evening. It was a lot of fun and the dresses turned out so cute!
-Marilee VW



Neighbors are much more than just names!
Grab a cup of coffee and let's meet these new neighbors!

Let me introduce you to Colonel Trent Brackin, Michelle Klein, and her daughter Jovi. They just recently moved to 1313 Cordova Ave.—where the Aldrichs used to live—and have been settling into their new house, which seems huge compared to the small house they had in Pella. “We enjoy the beautiful sunsets in the country,” comments Michelle, “along with our friendly neighbors.”

Let me first tell you a bit about 8-year-old Jovi. After moving in, they discovered that she shared her name with one of their new neighbors—the Vroegh’ daughter. Now there are two Jovi Maries within a half mile of each other. Imagine that! On the acreage, Jovi is responsible to care for two kittens and two miniature horses. She also takes lessons for gymnastics, tennis and swimming, and likes to play with her American Girl doll. If you ever meet Jovi, you’ll find she’s a sweet girl.

Michelle grew up south of Pella. After graduating from Pella High, she went to cosmetology school and cut hair for a while. Many know Michelle as the previous owner of the Concrete Closet in Pella. She has given that up to take care of their new house and to be a stay-at-home mom.

For Trent, moving here is like coming back home. He grew up on Cordova Ave.—closer to Highway 163—and many of his family members live within just a few miles. Originally working with his dad, Trent now does a lot of earth mov-

ing work on his own: dozing, constructing ponds and terraces, and tiling. Trent enjoys working around his new acreage and doing volunteer work for the Za Ga Zig Shrine in Altoona. Occasionally he will even do some auctioneering.

Which brings me back to my original introduction. Trent took a ten-day training course for auctioneering in Mason City a few years ago. There he learned that the title Colonel comes from Civil War days. After that war, a lot of equipment and supplies were available. The military leader—colonel—would sell these supplies to the public on auction. Since then, Colonel has become the proper title to give an auctioneer (similar to Doc. or Rev.).

Both Trent and Michelle grew up with horses. They have four horses and four cows with calves. They like to go camping and take their horses along for trail riding. If you drop by, you may see them puttering around outside, or preparing the hayloft in their large barn for a wedding. They plan to get married on September 22.

Welcome to the neighborhood! Barb and I enjoyed your warm hospitality. We hope that you enjoy your new home for many years to come.
-John Gorter

