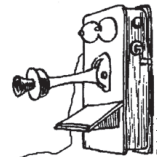


Peoria Partyline



... connecting the extended Peoria community

Volume 9. No. 1
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Midnight Fire Wakes Up Peoria

Early Sunday morning, November 25, a resident of Richland Township was on his way home from Pella when he noticed an eerie glow in the sky above the town of Peoria. Curious, he drove on up Temptation Hill and then noticed flames leaping into the sky. Something big was on fire. Immediately he called 911 to notify the Pella Fire Department. It was about 12:45 a.m.

Nearby neighbors also called in when they noticed the fire. As emergency vehicles began to arrive, a small crowd gathered as well. Many of them felt panic since it was unsure if anyone was at home when the fire started. Only later would they learn that renter, Alex Lemons, had left his home around midnight to stay with a friend in Pella.

Geneva Rozenboom, who lives next door to the fire scene, said, "We counted about five fire trucks, an ambulance, and numerous pickups with lights—whose job it was to stop and divert traffic. The first pumper shot water on the fire, and then a 3,400 gallon tank was set up on the street." Since Peoria does not have fire hydrants, two water trucks were kept busy shuttling water from Pella. "There were probably about 15 firefighters on scene," continued Geneva, "and they shut off all power and water to the house. That meant onlookers had to be kept back to stay safe." There was also concern for a neighboring house



which was downwind from the fire. "No one was home," said Geneva, "but the siding on the house—closest to the flames—began to melt. Firemen were spraying it to keep it from igniting. Fortunately *our* house was not in danger."

Nancy Van Wyk—whose son Jeremy owns the house that burned—was one of the spectators on scene. "I don't know when the firemen left," she said, "but we left around 3:30 a.m. The fire wasn't out yet at that time." The fire appears to have started next to the chimney where Alex had his TV and DVD player on some shelves. "It's so sad!" said Nancy, "he lost everything except what he had with him."



An unexpected blessing the night of the fire was that one of the firefighters—Linn Roose—grew up just down the road from Peoria. His knowledge of the layout of Peoria was a welcome help for emergency personnel.

Both Jeremy and Alex had insurance. Claims were made, and the burned remains have since been demolished and removed. Word is the basement hole will soon be filled, and then the lot will be put up for sale.

-Marilee VW, Geneva R, Nancy VW

Burned House Has Its Own Story

It was interesting to learn about some of the memories that resurfaced after the recent house fire in Peoria. Built by Gerrit Andringa Sr. in 1939 or '40, the little house was purchased by Andrew Bandstra in 1945. He added another room plus a garage, and set up a barber chair in the basement. Many in the township still remember going there for a 25-cent haircut. Children earned a pink or white peppermint if they sat still when it was their turn.

Another of Andrew's claims to fame was that he was Peoria's Justice of the Peace for awhile. He held court in the garage and was known for reprimanding mischievous teens—

- Continued on page 3

Truck Drives Into Hole In the Dark

On a crisp, dark morning in early October, Sue Van Ee noticed flashing lights at the end of their road, up by the highway. Once it got light, she joined others at the scene to find out what was going on. Apparently, around 4 a.m., a semi truck driver fell asleep while rounding the corner coming from Temptation Hill and heading towards the Skunk River bridge.



His rig left the pavement and the shoulder pulled him off the road. The truck plowed down the steep bank just east of Cordova Avenue, into the embankment of a huge hole that had been dug in Keith Van Ee's field for drainage, up and

over that, and down into the hole. The tractor hit the hole so hard that the front wheels of the rig were bent inwards. The trailer faired a bit better since it followed the tractor in. It was perched on the east bank of the hole.

It's unknown who called 911, but a starburst of cracks on the windshield indicated the driver hit the windshield with his head. He was taken to Pella Regional Health Center and could not remember what happened.



Sue said, "Later in the morning a dump truck arrived to take away the cargo in the trailer. It was food destined for the cafeterias at Pella Christian High and Central College. As I watched them removing the food, I asked if some of it could be donated to the Pella Food Shelf. 'No,' I was told. 'Due to

insurance rules, all of it needs to be disposed of.'" No doubt Pella Christian High and Central had to scramble to provide for their students that day.

As the morning progressed, passersby slowed down to stare, stop, or take pictures. Some needed to find a different route to town. Finally a tow truck arrived to disconnect the tractor from the trailer and pull it up onto Cordova Ave. Then it pulled out the trailer. Both were removed from the area with other trucks. Due to new environmental rules, workers were also seen working to remove any diesel-stained soil from the accident site.

-Marilee Vander Wal

Vos Family Tractor Ride

In 2007, Cornie and Gladys Vos decided to start a new family tradition. Every spring and fall, their family gets out their tractors and takes a ride to a local location. Planning and preparation includes choosing a lunch destination, organizing the lunch at the stop, inviting family, friends and neighbors to join, and readying tractors for the trip.

Most recently, the group gathered on a Saturday morning at grandson Jim and Ruth DeBruin's farm. It's proved to be an excellent beginning and ending place for the ride that adults and children look forward to for weeks. In no time the neighborhood was filled with activity and the sound of tractor engines. The riders rolled out from Jim and Ruth's around 9—off for a pleasant day of memory making.

Though the years have brought health issues that now keep Cornie and Gladys from riding along, this fall the family came up with an idea to involve them anyway. "We brought them out to the farm," said Ruth, "and then made sure they were part of the pictures we tried to take of all the tractors and people that had come. Then we had them follow everyone to town." As a final surprise and gift, Cornie and Gladys discovered their home had been chosen as the lunch destination.

Only a true country family organizes tractor rides as their family reunions and then invites all their friends and neighbors to join them. It is a true privilege to be included in this excursion. Thank you and God bless you, Cornie and Gladys, for starting this tradition. It truly is priceless.

-Nicki Veenstra



In Loving Memory

Gilbert Vander Wal was born and raised on a farm in the Lower Grove area. After graduation he married Iris, and they raised four children while working hard on their farm. Gilly also dedicated time to the Peoria Christian School, his children's activities, community Messiah concerts at Christmas, and the Peoria Christian Reformed Church.

After 35 years on the farm, Gilbert and Iris moved to Pella. He worked part time at Vermeer Manufacturing, continued to help on the farm, volunteered in the community, and did some traveling with his wife. He also enjoyed being a part of the Red Rock Threshers Tractor Club. A dedicated grandfather and great-grandfather, Gilly always had a smile or kind word for everyone he came into contact with

A true gentleman and honorable man, Gilbert showed his love for the Lord by the life he lived.



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

I'd like to introduce you to a very nice young family. Mike and Carrie Branderhorst live at 1504 Barrows Ave with their two children, Ashlyn who is eight, and Isabel who is four. They live right next to a pioneer cemetery and have done a lot of remodeling work to make their home beautiful and comfortable.

The Branderhorst family moved to this acreage the day before Thanksgiving in 2011. It was like coming back home for Mike since this was his stomping ground as a boy. His parents are Jerry and Chris Branderhorst. His cousin, Mike Vander Molen, lives just down the road. Mike attended Christian grade school and high school in Pella. He then worked a couple years each at De Jong Greenhouse and Pella Glass. Most recently he has been working for Van Sittert Plumbing—working the past 12 years doing commercial work in schools and churches.

Carrie was raised in Pella; her parents are Donna and Steve Van Weelden. She attended community schools and then went to DMACC. Carrie has been working for Pella Family Dentistry about 12 years, which she enjoys. After getting married the couple first lived downtown Pella before moving out to the country. Mike has also been a volunteer at the fire department in Pella. That worked well when they lived in town, but now he doesn't go out on as many calls.

Currently Mike is taking a break from the extensive

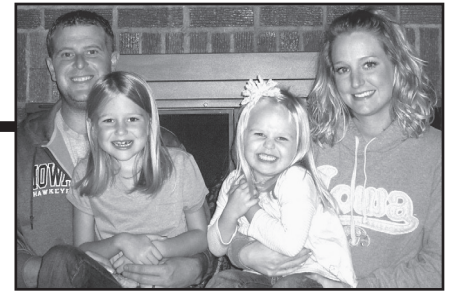
remodeling that's been going on in their house. Carrie enjoys gardening. Ashlyn likes to draw—which

she has done from a very young age—and Isabel likes to play with doll babies and get eggs from their chickens. The children have had the privilege of watching kittens being born, and they are hoping for more livestock later, such as a bottle-fed calf. Ashlyn would also like a bunny; and Isabel would like a turtle. As a family they enjoy the open space on their acreage and hanging out together. They look forward to snow tubing behind a four-wheeler when the snow comes.

If you ever visit their place, the first one to greet you will probably be Herky, a friendly lab mix dog that is almost full grown. He is named after the Iowa Hawkeye mascot. In fact, when the Hawkeyes play a football game, you will probably find the family in the shop watching the game on a large screen TV. Many of their friends will be there as well, like a tailgate party at home!

It's great having such fun loving neighbors as you in the area. We hope you continue to enjoy your lives out in the country.

-John Gorter



- Burned House Story con't.

even a couple of his own grandchildren. He had two very large, old, law books as well, and relatives remember that he kept them on a high shelf in the basement fruit room.

One day a young couple knocked on the door, and asked Andrew if he would marry them. He was more than willing, and soon they were on their way as "husband" and "wife." The backyard of the little house was a perfect place for neighborhood ball games, and to this day kids from "back then" refer to the place as "Bandstra's house."

Gerald and Geneva Rozenboom bought the house from her grandparents in 1965, and in 1970 Geneva's dad and sister bought it. Bev ran a beauty shop across the road—in a house trailer—for a few years, before she began renting the house, and later selling it.

Several owners came and went until that fateful day in late November 2012. "Good bye little house!"

-Marilee VW, Geneva R

*Congratulations to Gary
Wouterse and Marcia De
Jong who were married
recently.*



First Baby of the New Year

Although it didn't make it into the papers, Richland Township may have had the first baby of the New Year for this area. Early January 1, our neighbors—Jordan and Joy Roose—were going about their usual chores of feeding their two heifers, when the heifers wouldn't come up from down in the pasture. They seemed interested in something else, so Jordan went down to check. There he found a new born calf, shivering and icy.

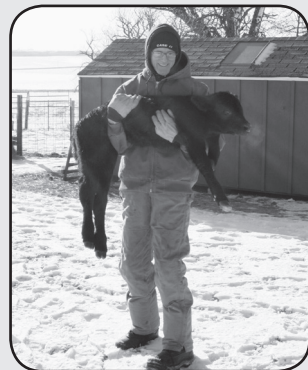
After running back up to the house, he and Joy returned with a sled and some blankets. They loaded the calf up and hauled it to their heated mudroom. The children watched as they rubbed the calf down until it was warm and dry. The children were so excited they would not leave the calf—even having lunch while seated around the dozing calf.

As the news spread, we walked across the road to join others that had come to see the new baby. When it was time to reunite it with its mother, we wondered,

"Would she accept it?" Loren helped carry the calf outside, and soon we knew. With lots of soft "moo's" the mother claimed her baby once again.

But, there's more to the story. The two heifers had been scheduled to go to the meat locker on January 2. The new little calf not only had its life saved by its loving owners, but it was also able to save the life of its mother—just by being born a bit more than 24 hours before that appointment.

-Marilee Vander Wal





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

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Farewell



Pastor Gorter and Barb have moved to a new ministry in South Dakota. We will miss their interactions with all of us in Richland Township.

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Interim Pastor for Peoria

For six months, a new family has moved into the parsonage up by the church. Pastor Douglas Van Der Pol, his wife Joni, and their three daughters Kristina, Jenna, and Olivia, have accepted Peoria church's invitation to be their interim pastor. The congregation is already blessed to have the family here.

Pastor Doug grew up in Monroe, and felt called to the ministry at age 16. After graduating from Central College, the Lord led him on a longer path to seminary than he had first planned, but today he enjoys serving the Lord in full time ministry. He has been a pastor in the PCA since 1996. He loves to hunt, fish, and bowl.

Joni is a wife, mother, and teacher at Pella Christian HS. She has been in education for many years, and she loves to sew, scrapbook, be involved with politics, and go for walks.

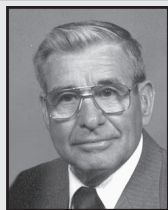
Kristina is a senior at Pella Christian HS. She plans to attend Dordt College next year and major in English or Pre-Law. She loves to sing, bowl, do Reader's Theater, and read.

Jenna, a sophomore at Pella Christian High, is active in volleyball, choir, and Reader's Theater. The latest instrument she's learned to play is the bass guitar. She loves to be with her friends.

Olivia, as the youngest in the family, attends Pella Christian Grade School. She is in GEMS, loves to sing and play the drums, and hopes to try AAU volleyball this winter.

The family also has a chocolate lab called Hershey. Pastor Doug says he is the goofiest dog the family has ever raised.

-Marilee Vander Wal



Fred De Nooy grew up near Peoria and met his wife Goldie at the Peoria Christian Reformed Church. It was there, too, that he professed his faith in his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Shortly after the couple was married, Fred joined the US Army and served in WW II.

Fred and Goldie raised five children on the farm. Later he trucked for Peoria Stockyards. After moving to Pella, Fred worked at Ring-O-Matic, Midwest Sanitation, the Super Car Wash, and he had a lawn mowing service.



Sammie Lee Schmidt was born near Taintor and shone in sports during high school. Following graduation he married Rose Mary, and they raised two sons. Sammie started his own construction company, and was well known in the area for his exceptional masonry work. He also set up a fish hatchery on the South Skunk River Bottom for a time. Sam was a man of many talents—especially country musical abilities—and an avid hunter. Hunting morel mushrooms, gardening and juicing were his favorite past-times. But most of all he was a man of God.

In Loving Memory

Anna Roose was raised in the Peoria area, and was a life-long, active member of the Peoria Christian Reformed Church. She also served on many other committees in the area.

As a young woman, Anna married Cornelius Roose, and they raised five children on a farm northwest of Peoria.

She worked several years as a cook at both Central Park Café and Hilltop South, enjoyed volunteering, and loved her hobbies which included crocheting, sewing, and playing games with her friends.



Jerry Lee Van Hal was raised near Sully, and had a life long love for the Lord and

His Word. He married Darlene and they raised four children on farms in the Sully and Richland Township areas. Later Jerry worked at Vermeer Manufacturing for twenty years.

Jerry attended Covenant Reformed, enjoyed volunteering at the Bibles 4 Missions Thrift Center, and spending time with his family. One of his favorite hobbies was woodworking. He enjoyed building unique wooden equipment and trucks. He was a big JD fan.

