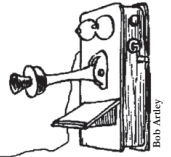


Peoria Partyline



...connecting the extended Peoria community

Volume 9. No. 2

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Do you want to be on our mailing list? Will you be moving or have a new address?

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Do or Die for a Great Dream

Summer sounds in Iowa include the roar of crop dusters swooping down over maturing crops. A tried and true mix of power and delivery—and the only way, right? Not necessarily. In 1979 two local farmers imagined aerial spraying being done with a different sort of bird. It needed to be light, maneuverable, efficient and affordable. Ken Fynaardt and his son Russ were convinced that a specially designed Ultralite could meet those expectations, and they went to work building one.



With the help of Dennis Blanke and Roy Vander Waal, the men found an Ultralite kit that included a motor, pipes and a roll of fabric. After assembling the frame they took the fabric, wrapped it around the pipes, and then took a hair dryer to it so the material would shrink tight and smooth. Next came the engine, and finally a tank and spray nozzle.

“We used a two-seater plane design since it had the most power,” said Russ, “and the nozzle rotated which made a foam.” It appears that—as the chosen pilot—he flew dangerously low. “For it to work best,” he continued, “you had to fly within six to eight feet off the ground.” Sometimes he would come back with soybean leaves on his wheels—indicating that often he was even lower than that—and at 40 miles an hour!

The team ended up making ten planes and even went to the Iowa State Fair to sell some of them. Most had only



one seat, but a few were set up with two. Russ and/or Roy would test fly each plane—which was a good thing—because twice they had to make an emergency landing due to improperly vented fuel tanks. If such a landing happened, two from the team would arrive to help carry the plane back to safety.

“Our Ultralites did a great job of spraying,” said Ken, “but we ended up doing it for only one year.” The two flies in their ointment ended up being safety and liability. Powered by a two cycle engine, the planes were vulnerable to plug failure which could cause the engine to sputter. “That’s not what you want when you’re at the end of a row and trying to bring the plane up over high line wires or a tree,” said Ken, “and such safety issues in turn made the cost of liability insurance unreasonably high.” When faced with that reality, the inventors gave up their dream.

-Terry Bandstra and Marilee VW

Something Out of Nothing

Jerry Van Wyk has taken on many odd jobs, since retiring from Pella Corp, but none so strange as a recent trip to help with last year’s corn and bean harvest in Ukraine. After a 24-hour journey on November 26—with stopovers in Minneapolis and Amsterdam—Jerry and friend Greg Van Dyke landed in Kiev, Ukraine, to meet up with Valod—the manager of the farm where they would be working.

After shopping for some supplies they drove about 105 miles to Overidge (a town

- Continued on page 3

Home Sweet Hotel

“Were you raised in a barn?” Chances are that some of you have been asked this question when your behavior was less than exemplary. But it’s a question not meant to be answered of course, unless you were one of the Nibbelink brothers. They could have smartly replied with a, “No, I was raised in a hotel,” and they would have been right. Not as a family that was down on their luck—moving from hotel to hotel—but as really living in the once fashionable Peoria Hotel!

A long time ago, Peoria—in its very early days—was a busy rural town with a real hotel. Jon Nibbelink remembers hearing of a discussion that Peoria, along with Oskaloosa, was under consideration as a possible location for Mahaska County’s headquarters. It would be nice to “know the rest of the story” but for whatever reason, as time edged on, the hotel was no longer needed. Part of it was then moved to a farmstead that Jon Nibbelink’s grandfather—Gerrit Nibbelink—had purchased. It’s the same farm where Jon and Doris live today.

One can only imagine how the move occurred without the modern machinery and tools we now use. A team or two of horses would surely have been used—maybe more—but the rest is left to our imaginations. No doubt many of the locals turned out to see such an auspicious event.



And so a hotel ended up on a farm. Over the years many children called the house home—including Henry, (Jon’s father) and his eight siblings, and later Henry’s family (Jon and his siblings). Since only part of the hotel had been moved, only part of the home was hotel—that being the south side, facing the road. It included a living room and bedroom downstairs and two bedrooms upstairs (one belonging to the boys). The construction in this part of the house was superb, probably

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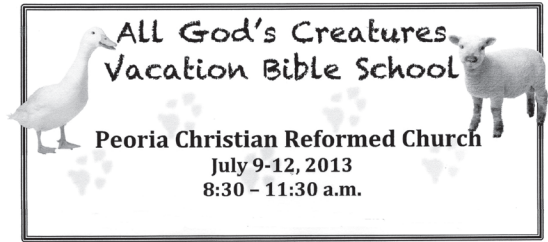
Musings and Memories of Flint Ridge School

Once again we’re going to feature a country school from Richland Township’s former days. The charm of its story—as told by Wilma Blom—will entertain us for the next few issues. No doubt many will think back to their own days of school, and today’s youngsters will have fun comparing their schools to those of long ago.

Flint Ridge School was located near the southwest corner of Richland Township. As was true of most country schools it was not only a school, but also the cornerstone of a neighborhood. Most of the nearby farms were owned by the people who lived on them, but there were a few farms that were rented. The chance that someone would leave



Flint Ridge School



Attention children entering preschool through 6th grade, you are invited to join us July 9-12 at Peoria CRC as we learn more about God’s creatures throughout the Bible and all of creation.

We will be studying stories from the Bible including Noah’s Ark, Daniel and the Lion’s Den, the Lost Sheep and more! We will also enjoy playing games together, singing songs of praise, making fun animal crafts, and of course eating delicious snacks.

On Friday evening, July 12, we will have a short program at 6:30, followed by a Community Hog Roast. If you know anyone who would enjoy this week of VBS at Peoria CRC, please have them register online at www.peoriacrc.org or contact Helen De Jong (641-637-4322).

Children entering 7th grade - adults are welcome to join us as helpers for these activities. If you have questions or would like to volunteer, contact Suzy Veenstra (641-780-8856) or Tammy Veenstra (641-780-2885). Hope to see you there!



Please join us on the grounds of the Peoria Church following the VBS program which starts at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, July 12. It will be a great time of fellowship over delicious food. We’re looking forward to seeing you there.

and others move into the neighborhood, was probably our mini lesson in diversity. The new kids always looked “funny.” We didn’t realize that we probably looked “funny” to them also. What would they have in their lunch pail? We stared at their clothes. Just how smart were they and how would they behave on the playground? Tough or tame? We wondered, and then one day they didn’t look strange anymore and without anyone noticing they became a part of us.

My own memory of my first day at Flint Ridge School could be labeled “My Move from Utopia.” I had heard that school was a fine thing and headed off that September morning with an eager smile. Mother had me dressed in a cute dress with a little matching hat. I had barely reached the edge of the school yard when one of the big kids spied me, ran towards me, snatched

- Continued on page 4



Sagging Stones Set Straight

Some of the head stones in the Peoria Cemetery have been calling for attention. Rather than standing tall and straight—marking the final resting place of so many—they have begun to crumble, sag, and lean. Some have even fallen over and become displaced. After looking at the deterioration for years, the trustees finally

decided to listen to all those “voices.”

They did some checking and discovered that there are several companies who offer restoration for cemetery stones—but materials and labor are very expensive. Requiring families to maintain head stones was also not possible since most or all of a deceased person’s relatives have passed on themselves, by the time a stone begins to settle or lean. A final option involved checking with Greg and Brenda Watts (of Watts Family Monument from Montezuma) who are the current gravediggers for Peoria Cemetery.

“They informed us that they could do some restoration,” said Lawrence Roose, “and if hired, could do it at a much better rate than the restoration companies.” That’s what the trustees decided to do, and so far the Watts have restored some of the worst stones.

Restoration includes some or most of the following: a new four-foot deep footing, a new poured cement base, removing and resetting the head stone, adding dirt or lime under existing stones to stabilize them, regluing stones to cement bases, or gluing broken stones back together. Some of the very old stones—ones beyond repair—have to be disposed of. In those cases, relatives are contacted and asked to put down a new stone to replace the old one.



“What we have had done so far has greatly improved the looks of the cemetery,” said Lawrence, “but more needs to be done, and probably will be in the future.” The cost of repairing the stones is done with cemetery funds that are received from the township thru taxation. We, as a township, wish to thank Greg and Brenda for all of their help in upgrading the appearance of our cemetery.

-Lawrence Roose, MVW



Congratulations to each of you hardworking graduates from the Peoria area! It is a big accomplishment to earn your diploma! You are all representatives of our township, and we wish you God’s blessings as you begin the next chapter of your lives.

MEMORIAL DAY

- Everyone is invited to the annual Peoria Cemetery Memorial service on Monday, May 27.
- Bring along your lawn chairs and claim your spot on the cemetery grounds for the service which starts at 9 a.m. *(The gathering will move to the Peoria school gym in case of rain.)*
- Cinnamon rolls, coffee and juice will be served.



-Something Out of Nothing con't.

northwest of Kiev) and then on for another 18-20 miles to the farm.

Each farm had an identifying pillar as well as their own guards to protect crops and machinery. Posted hammer and sickle insignia on the fairly flat, but very rough land, gave evidence of a former connection to Russia.



Some of the crops had been harvested but most still stood in the fields. One 500+ acre bean field was testing about 20%, yet combine operators drove in anyway—cutting the beans so high that their dampness plugged up the combine. Nearby, 4000 acres of corn stood waiting for a combine to be shipped from Germany. Promised for Jerry and Greg’s use, it had been

delayed in transit.

The farm’s tractors all had something wrong with them (from minor to major). Parts could be ordered—difficult due to the language barrier—but urgency usually resulted in making parts from scratch. Old machinery was scavenged but often the guys felt like they were making something out

of nothing.

Ten days into their stay, Jerry and Greg saw their first snow. It was so deep it reached the ears on the corn that was still in the field. There is no snow removal by the government, so each farmer has to clear his own farm. “We saw them drive over the snow for several days before they even attempted to clear it,” said Jerry.

There were constant breakdowns of machinery too. “Towards the end of our stay,” said Jerry, “it felt like we were making nothing out of nothing!” The temperatures got colder and colder, fuel started gelling, and tractors would not start—all increasing the levels of frustration.

Five 1980-type, portable, Behlen drying bins stood nearby, but they were no longer functional. “The plan was to use them to dry the crops, said Jerry, “but there was no loading chute to get the crops into the bins. They were looking to us to tackle this project.”

So, did the guys get the bins working again? Tune in to the next issue to find out.



-Nancy Van Wyk



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

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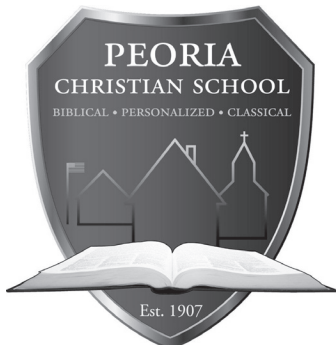
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- Home Sweet Hotel con't.

state-of-the-art for its time. Ceilings were high, hardwood floors throughout, and ornate trim decorating the outside. The north side of the house was actually an addition that included the kitchen, a stairway, and a couple of rooms on the second level. One was a large room used as a playroom. The other was called "Uncle Frank's room" because it housed some of his belongings. It was unlocked but off limits to the Nibbelink brothers. They, being curious, were often tempted to check it out. Imagine that!

There were two stairways leading to the upstairs, one on the hotel side and one on the other side, but there was not a connecting hallway between the two parts of the house on the 2nd level. Boys will be boys however, and they soon discovered a shortcut from their bedroom to the playroom. A doorway in their bedroom opened to the flat roof of a porch—an ideal shortcut to the window of the playroom. Why bother with a couple of stairways? Supposedly this was a forbidden route and taking it didn't happen often, but one wonders . . .

The boys also seemed to recall, with less than favorable memories, a little "hokey nook" under the stairway. It proved to be an ideal place to put misbehaving boys—an old-fashioned timeout area—in the dark.

The Nibbelink brothers lived in their grand old hotel-house until they were in their teens. At that time a tidy brick home was built to replace the larger house. It is now home to Jon and Doris. Recently, this brick home received some renovations of its own—much needed updates and some delightful additions. Like the original hotel-house, it too is "a fine place to hang your hat!"
-Wilma Blom

Donations Donations Donations Donations Donations

The Peoria Partyline is starting its 9th year!
If you appreciate the paper, here's what you can do:

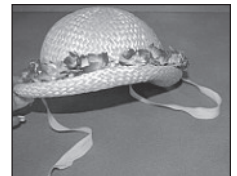
Suggested \$2 annual donation. Send your check to the Peoria Church marked
for the Peoria Partyline (120 Peoria West St. Pella, IA 50219)

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

- Flint Ridge School con't.

my sassy hat, and threw it into the ditch.

I was not aware of it, but I had lived quite a charmed life. As an only child for five years, I had been doted on by an unmarried aunt and a neighbor lady who had no children of her own. Unbeknownst to me, a brother would be arriving in the fall, but for the most part, my life had been over protected. It's no wonder, then, that I don't remember much more about day one, except the hat incident—which was seared in my memory. I related the story to Mom and the neighbor lady—who were anxiously awaiting my return to hear about my first day at school. They were shocked that such a thing could happen to a poor, innocent little girl, and they pretty much black-listed the ornery kid for life. In retrospect it was one of the many lessons we all need to learn. "There will be some surprises along the way, and not all of them will be good. Welcome to the real world!"



Having survived day one, my memories of Flint Ridge could now be renamed, "It's a Wonderful Life." My first teacher was a young man that I placed on quite a pedestal! If one were giving the Golden Apple award for making memories, he deserved first place in my mind.

Find out what made school so wonderful for little Wilma. Watch for the story to continue in the next issue.
-Wilma Blom