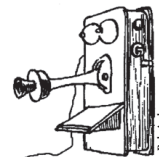


Peoria Partyline



... connecting the extended Peoria community

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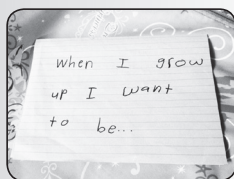
December 2013

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New Home Arrives for New Neighbors

In late September two semi trucks labored up the hill in Peoria with an unusual load. They were moving a house—actually modules for a house—from the All American Homes plant in Dyersville to a waiting basement just north of Peoria. Eagerly waiting for its arrival were Jesse Peterson, his wife Katie and their children Braydon, Annika and Jace.

The family had been busy for weeks in anticipation of this day. First, the old homestead had to be cleaned up. After purchasing the property from Grandpa Jim Bandstra, Jesse—who started his own tiling and excavation business at the beginning of the year—moved in to clear some trees, remove some old buildings, and dig a basement. The rest of the family were on hand to help and cheer him on. They had sold their home north of Pella before ordering the house, and when it sold in April they moved in with Katie's parents, Terry and Lona Bandstra, so as to be near to their building site.



There was also a mobile home on the property that needed to be moved. Its owner made arrangements for it to be moved to eastern Iowa, and then the preparation work went into high gear. Soon basement walls—the styrofoam/cement variety—rose and the foundation framework for the new home took shape. Then everyone began to look forward to the day that the rest of the home would arrive.



Hearts raced a little faster as the two semis pulled onto the property. A huge crane had also arrived to lift the house modules off the trucks and onto the basement walls. Talk about instant house! The crane began lifting modules at 11 a.m. and had the last



one in place by 3:00 that afternoon. What an exciting day for the Petersons! Now they will be busy with final preparations—such as hooking up electricity, water, septic, etc.—β preparing the inside of their new home before they move in. No doubt they are aiming to complete things well before Thanksgiving.

Thanks to the Peterson family for sharing some pictures and a bit of your new home story with us! It was interesting and we welcome you to Richland Township!

-Terry B. & Marilee VW

Jesse Peterson has been busy in another part of Richland Township too. Mid summer he worked on clean-up below the old Stockyards in Peoria. Using some of his excavation equipment, he pushed five old hog buildings into a huge hole that he had dug so they could be burned, broke up cement, and arranged for Marty Vander Molen to move the cement chunks to the Skunk River dike that protects the river bottom of our township.

-Terry Bandstra



What's an Old Picture Worth?

Isn't it fun when an old picture is found and memories begin to surface that give the rest of us a peep into a Peoria—that for the most part—no longer exists?

There used to be four barns on the Peoria church yard in the 1920s. Two were church barns (known as the "bottom barns" due to their location down the hill near the southeast end of the property), one a school barn (where the current gym is), and one a parsonage barn. There was a middle alley in



each barn with stalls lining it. There horses were tied, fed and watered so they wouldn't get restless while they waited for their owners to return from school or church functions.

The school barn and the church barns did not have hay lofts because horse owners would bring their own hay. Water for the animals came from a tub near the school building which was filled with a pump connected to a nearby well.

- Continued on page 3

Flint Ridge School (Part 3)

Wilma and her country school classmates loved their teacher, Mr. Van Arkel, for many reasons, but they were especially delighted when he would take them on nature walks. And those outings were always memorable even though it was usually just a visit to the pasture adjacent to the school grounds. Wilma's story continues . . .

The scenery changed from season to season, and our teacher wanted us to be aware of it. There was also a creek running through the pasture, and of course that was an attraction beyond compare. Crossing on the rocks, slipping off, and getting wet were part of the excitement. But mostly I remember the bull snakes. The big boys would find them, grab them behind the neck, chase after the little kids, and hopefully scare the wits out of us. I learned early on to be brave. Being frightened provided a wonderful opportunity to terrorize the faint at heart. So I remained totally unconcerned as the fat snake was tossed about, and therefore warded off any special attention.



A visit from the county superintendent would strike a totally different type of terror in the hearts of most of us—as I imagine it did the teacher—but we were only worried about ourselves. As the story goes, upon the return from one of our nature walks, the county superintendent was waiting by the

school. No doubt he was hoping to see academics in action. Mr. Van Arkel stated what had transpired and the superintendent agreed that such outings could be a good thing, however "All things in moderation!" he cautioned.

Probably no memory stands out in the minds of country school kids as much as the "Programs" we presented to our parents and neighbors. I cannot imagine what a challenge that would be for the teacher, who had as many as eight grades to teach, a school to keep clean, a stove to fire, etc. However, Mr. Van Arkel seemed to rise to the occasion with ease. The big kids were usually selected for the little plays that we called dialogues. Often they had a good deal to memorize, and since acting did not necessarily come naturally for all, it usually took a good deal of practice to put on a fine show. We younger ones usually had to say a "piece" which we could take home and memorize. "Speak clearly, with expression, and loud enough for all to hear," prompted Mr. Van Arkel.

When we started our dress rehearsals the curtains were up,

and often the entire afternoon was devoted to practicing our program. We had all heard of stage fright, and the thought of that happening to us, personally, proved to be a great motivator.

A great honor was to be chosen to draw the curtain. You had to be on your toes and open and close the curtain at the appropriate time as the scenes changed. For the duration of the program we were all hidden behind the curtain. "Quiet" was the rule, but it was always a challenge for both kids and the teacher.

I remember programs being presented during an afternoon, but the evening programs were special. We hardly knew each other decked out in our Sunday best—possibly a freshly sewn dress or shirt. The boys had their hair combed and in place, and the girls had fresh curls and new hair ribbons. It was such a great time but there was a sense of relief after the whole show was over. I can only imagine how the teacher must have felt.



Coffee time followed—an array of pies, cakes, cookies, and brownies along with coffee and Kool Aid. Playing a bit with our friends was the frosting on the cake. However we were cautioned to not ruin our nice clothes, so the rowdiness was held to a minimum.

Another favorite were Halloween Parties at Flint Ridge. We did all the things you read about in books of the past—bobbing for apples, trying to eat an apple dangling on a string, and other games. Students dressed in costumes they had created with a bit of help from their parents. There were sheets with eyes cut out, oversized clothes and hats, and faces painted in goofy ways. Finally everyone gathered around for the big reveal: "Who had the best costume?" The following day we wondered if any tricksters had chosen our school to try their mischief on. Seeing the outhouses intact was a good sign that we had escaped any special attention.

During the winter, there was an activity that the children enjoyed so much, it seemed to "affect" their hearing. Tune in for Part 4 in the next issue to find out what the kids suddenly were unable to hear.

-Wilma Blom

Country Dream Comes True (Part 2)

Matt and Patty Stringer took a huge risk in making their country dream come true, yet they proved to themselves that they could be successful farmers. Their menagerie of animals was happy and healthy, and they had learned to be self-sufficient. But Wilma found that the Stringers had much more to share. She continues her story.

As if the animals were not enough work and responsibility, I was truly amazed at the gardens and plants surrounding their home. Broad leafed trees were branching out and a small orchard offered several different kinds of apples, a couple of kinds of cherry, an apricot, a peach, a plum and a pear tree. As we sat in the gazebo in the back yard, I noticed a grape arbor and several vegetable gardens. There were tripods in place for pole beans, and watermelon, honey melon and squash had sprouted and started to grow. Potatoes were planted in a clever way so that “digging” potatoes would not be necessary, and red strawberries winked at me just waiting to be picked. “I do a lot of canning and food processing,” said Patty. “Last year I made pumpkin butter from my pumpkins and even offered some for sale.”

Besides the garden produce, the Stringers have done a beautiful job with landscaping. A wide variety of perennials dot the yard, including many different kinds of peonies. “They are my favorite,” says Patty. “and when they are all in bloom they are gorgeous!” I was also impressed with her large weigela—somehow *mine* never quite do what I think they should do.



It was a slightly warm morning and my grandson Drew needed a drink of water so we stepped into the house for a bit. What a charming place we found!

“We made changes to the house so it would be right for us,” said Patty. “Matt is a carpenter and tackled the jobs on his own.” I admired the kitchen cupboards—perfect for a country home—and their wood stove in the living area. “Most of our heat in the winter comes from our stove,” continued Patty, “so finding and cutting wood is something else we’ve had to learn.”

Then we noticed a cozy basket next to the wood stove. Inside was a Chihuahua and her five babies. It looked like too large a family for such a tiny mother, but the puppies were doing well. This was definitely the “frosting on the cake” for Drew. He settled down in a chair and cuddled a puppy or two. What a special surprise!

All too soon it was time for us to move on. No doubt Patty had a list of things to accomplish yet that day. We appreciated her warmth, friendliness, and willingness to spend a morning with us. The view from their home was breathtaking, and it seemed as though one could see to the edge of the world. We extend to the Stringers a very belated welcome to the neighborhood!

-Wilma Blom

- Old Picture continued

The parsonage barn was likely located where the current bus barn is. It was off limits to students but that didn't stop them from using its large doors for a backstop during the many ball games played on the church yard.

It was also large enough for only two horses—likely the maximum number of horses a preacher was allowed to have. It had a hayloft and a space for a cow—shared by the preacher and the principal. Do you suppose one of the questions asked potential preachers was “Can you milk a cow?”

Since there was no minimum age requirement for “one horse power” transportation, even 2nd or 3rd graders were in charge of caring for the horse or pony they rode to school.

Other children walked to school, or rode together in a buggy or cart. Cornie Van Wyngarden remembers picking up other students on their way to school. “When the buggy was full,” he said, “the overflow students would just stand on the back axle and hitch a ride.”

The old picture evoked a lot more memories! Tune in to the next issue for more fun!
-Doris Nibbelink



Rev. Dan Carter was born in Oskaloosa in 1948. In 1972 he met and married Karen Kennedy and they raised seven children. The couple attended Bible college and after graduation Dan served as a pastor with the Assemblies of God until 2008. Just after his 65th birthday he was called to his eternal home.

Dan loved his family and laughter was always present in their home. He enjoyed fishing and sitting on his front porch swing watching birds. He also spent time operating a HAM radio, watching NASCAR, and hunting morel mushrooms. He never went anywhere without his mini vise-grips and a pocket knife.

Dan's favorite pastime was reading his Bible. He was a man of God, and will be remembered as a Godly role model to his family. Jesus and his wife, Karen, were his best friends.

In Loving Memory



Wilma Van Zante was born in 1920. She attended country school near her home and desired to attend high school but her parents could not afford the cost. So she lived with her parents, on the farm, for many years until she met Gerrit Slykhuis, who had recently been discharged from the Army. They were united in marriage and desired raising their own family, but God had other plans. The couple moved to Peoria and Wilma worked at the egg processing plant in Pella while Gerrit worked at his repair shop in Peoria, as a blacksmith. Later the couple moved to Pella and Wilma worked at Pella Corp. Satisfied with the simple things in life, she loved God, was an avid gardener and found much pleasure in doing embroidery and cross-stitching.



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

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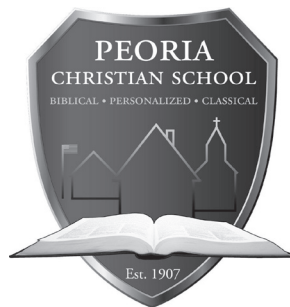
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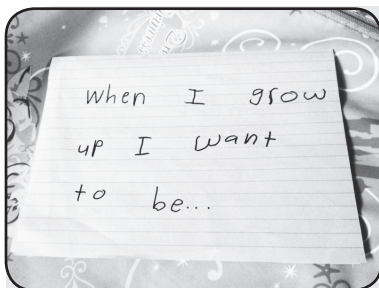
Here is something perfectly delightful to do with your wee ones this Christmas. In fact they'll probably like it so much they'll want to do it over and over again with you. But it's not just for kids. Adults will enjoy it too.

Type the address posted to the left into your search engine. Hit enter and you'll be whisked away to a silent and peaceful night. It will put you in a Christmas mood for sure. Be sure to turn on your speakers.

Please also take the time to talk with your loved ones about the song *Silent Night, Holy Night*. Who is the song talking about and what is it that makes Christmas so wonderful and special? Why His birth of course.

God bless you all and to all a very Merry Christmas.

http://www.redredecards.com/2004/ashland_university_christmas_card/



Where Are They Now?

Have you ever found your thoughts wandering to years gone by, and then stopping as someone's name and face suddenly focuses your attention? "I wonder what ever became of them?" you ask yourself. "It would be interesting to know!" Well, the Peoria Partyline team thought it would be fun to try and track down some of those people who used to be promising youngsters in Richland Township. We've got a few stories already started, but we'd welcome any and all suggestions for future stories on this topic. Maybe you'd like to submit a story about yourself and what you became when you grew up!

For starters, let's focus on a young man who left the rolling fields of our township for the skyscrapers and bustling streets of New York City.

"New York, New York, If I can make it there, I'll make it anywhere." Jon Van Wyk heard the call of this song and set his sights on making it as an actor in New York City. This Peoria kid—son of Jerry and Nancy Van Wyk—graduated from Peoria Christian Grade School in 1995 and has always been interested in music and acting. He graduated with a BA in Theatre from Northwestern College in Orange City and worked as a professional actor in the Twin Cities for six years. During that time he was in several productions, including a few national tours. His work included musicals, plays, singing gigs, etc.

Today he lives in NYC. Before his arrival 2 1/2 years ago, he had saved up enough money to support himself for a year without employment other than acting. He knows it takes hard work (and maybe a little bit of luck) to achieve success in the acting business, but he is giving it his best shot.

So how do you achieve success?—auditions, auditions, auditions. "Some weeks are filled with auditions, others, very few," says Jon. "The most auditions I've done in a day is four." Workdays are filled with either checking for audition opportunities, preparing for, or attending auditions. So what's an audition like? And how does one know if someone is looking for an actor? Tune in to the next issue for the rest of Jon's story.

—Sharon Blom