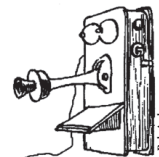


Peoria Partyline



... connecting the extended Peoria community

Volume 11, No. 4

December 2015

Short n' Long of it . . .

- Pg. 1..... Sheep Shearing
- Pg. 2..... Unlikely Cruise
- Pg. 2..... Township pictures
- Pg. 3..... In Loving Memory
- Pg. 3 PPL to End?
- Pg. 4..... Old Quarry
- Pg. 4..... CoLine Update
- Pg. 4..... Classifieds



Cabin in the Woods
Page 2

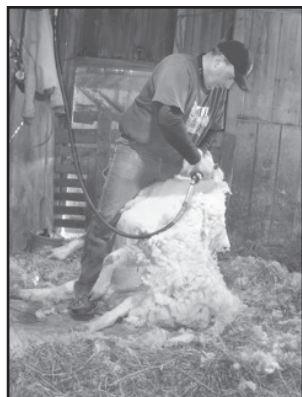


Peoria in the Netherlands
Page 3

Sheep Shearing a Specialized Service

Shearing sheep is very labor intensive work—just ask Rick Kucera, from Baxter, who shears for Harv and Sharon Blom when their sheep need a trim. “We let him off easy this time,” said Sharon, “as he only had to do 45 ewes for us. A busy day for him often means up to 140 head in a day!” The shepherd (Harv) was busy too! In between catching each ewe, bringing it to Rick, and stuffing the cut wool into 6-foot-long wool bags, Harv peppered him with questions about shearing this past February.

Rick had some very interesting things to share. “A lot of shearing takes place in Iowa in February and March,” he said, “just before lambing. This is to encourage the ewes to give birth to their lambs inside—where it is warmer and out of the wind. Most flocks are sheared once a year,” he continued, “but a few farmers do it twice. Generally lambs are not shorn, but if wool is a good price then I might be asked to shear them too.”



Harv asked Rick, “Where is our wool going after shearing today?”

Rick responded, “It will be sent to a facility in Ohio where wool is processed, sorted for quality, and then sold to yarn and clothing companies. Russia and China both consume quite a bit of wool. Wool is even used inside baseballs.”

We also asked Rick about the basics of shearing a 150 to 200 pound ewe. “I am not the world record

holder,” he conceded, “as it takes that person just 17 seconds! For me it usually takes about 2½ to 3 minutes per sheep.” He also had a good laugh when we asked why sheep lay still when tipped back on their haunches for shearing. “I didn’t know they do that,” he grinned. “I guess they are a submissive animal when predators approach.” Harv thought maybe the true answer was the years of experience of the sheep shearer.



Rick explained some other tidbits involved in shearing. “The blades—which consist of the comb on the bottom and the cutter on top—need to be sharpened after shearing about 15 to 20 sheep. The cutter moves at 2800 RPM.” He also cleans and disinfects his equipment between farms so that diseases are not spread from one flock to another.



How did he get interested in shearing? “When my dad was alive he did some shearing and my brother also knows how to shear,” said Rick. Then in 2007—after he went broke raising hogs—he needed to earn money. “It looked like a good thing to learn,” said Rick. “I watched a lot of videos on Youtube.”

When he first started shearing, Rick would contact people to inquire about jobs “Now that I have been at it for several years,” he adds, “people contact me by word of mouth.” The Bloms heard about Rick from a young Mennonite who used to shear for them.

“There are very few full-time shearers in the state of Iowa,” said Rick, “and they are

Questions or Comments:
peoria.ia.news@gmail.com
Online issue: www.peoriacrc.org

- Continued on page 4

An Unlikely Kind of Cruise

Have you ever thought about going on a cruise? Last year Wilma Van't Sant was hoping to go on a cruise with the Charles Stanley ministry in Alaska but things fell through. "I felt the Lord saying, 'No', this time," she said, "but I always knew that He had something else planned." When one of her friends was heading to Haiti for a mission trip, once again Wilma found her thoughts going along, "I wish I could go on a mission trip," she told herself, but then quickly dismissed the desire because of physical limitations she knew she had.

Soon thereafter a friend of Wilma's attended a concert in Kalona. While there she heard about a mission cruise to Honduras, Belize and Cozumel. It was sponsored by Don Shire Ministries, and the purpose was to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with all who will hear—through personal ministry and in assisting missionaries and evangelical servants through short-term mission opportunities.

A perfect match for Wilma. She was ready to go and fulfill both of her desires. From January 11-18, 2015, she and her friends flew from Des Moines to Galveston, Texas, where they boarded the Norwegian Star.

Some of the ministry opportunities were prayer, visiting prisons, retirement homes, and schools, offering children ministries, door-to-door visitation, and



Cabin in the Woods

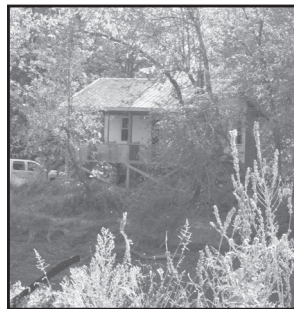
As Iowans living in a rural farming community, we notice things others might not. We say things like: "The corn is up!" "Look at that field, already tasseling." "The cows have started calving." "Looks like a new machine shed." "The river is rising, there's lots of driftwood." I might add that

it's not unusual for local folk to pay more attention to what's outside the window than to the road itself. But be assured—while looking around, they are NOT speeding!

So . . . it's not surprising that something a bit unusual—happening just west of the Skunk River Bridge—caught the watchful eye of many of us. Along the river bank is a new cabin in the woods.

It belongs to Gary and Linda Steenhoek, is situated on their land, and is a do-it-yourself project—basically a work in progress. The cabin will be just that, a basic cabin. Camping is a favorite activity for their family, and now that can happen without a tent or camper. It is an ideal place for a bit of fishing and a boat ride. With trees, wildlife, birds, and water, it is a perfect place to relax and enjoy. Hopefully for them it becomes one of their very favorite places.

-Wilma Blom



work projects. Their first stop was Roatan, Honduras. Roatan is an island approximately 35 miles off of the mainland of Honduras. Roatan has beautiful landscape, beaches and friendly local people. While there the group was involved in painting and general maintenance projects, a children's carnival and a local jail ministry.

The next stop was Belize City, which is the capitol of Belize. There they visited some of the local schools, helped with work projects around the city, and visited a retirement home. Wilma used her story-telling talent to share the story of the Prodigal Son with many of the children they met.

Cozumel is an island off of the mainland of Mexico which is known for its beautiful beaches and vibrant culture. In Cozumel they were able to work with the local church in doing a work project and hosting street carnivals for the local children.

"Late Friday evening we had a Bible Study and share time with the Christian staff on the ship," remembers Wilma. "It was very moving."

What a great way to enjoy a cruise yet do it with a purpose. This verse has new meaning for Wilma, "For I know the plans, I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11. When asked if she would go again, she said that she would love to if the opportunity arises. Would *you* be "Ready to Go" if the Lord called you?

-Nancy VanWyk



Above: 5th through 8th graders from Peoria Christian School gather pumpkins for a fall Serve Project.

Below: Grape harvesting at a large vineyard in our township. It is now owned by Jaron Vos.



A Bit of Peoria in the Netherlands

As I understand, there are many people who have places they want to see and things they want to do before their life on earth is over, and so the phrase “bucket list” was coined. Do you have one? I don’t. Things just seem to unfold in my life—and that has meant lots of surprises!

My youngest brother attended Central College, and through their Study Abroad program was introduced to life in both France and Italy. Long after those days had passed, the lure of far away places kept him eager to explore and travel.

After retirement it has been my good fortune to join him on some trips. These travels have found me in places I never expected to experience. South America, Central America, Europe and even a bit of Asia—when we visited Turkey—have happened. You can find proof on my passport.

This past spring we decided to do something different. A river cruise in the Netherlands—called Amsterdam to Amsterdam—sounded relaxing (it wasn’t) and interesting (it was). Our river boat took us down various rivers and canals in the Netherlands, and also down some in Belgium. Lovely trip, but less than lovely weather. I surely learned why windmills are perfect for Holland!

We developed a new appreciation for the Dutch! They were out and about—riding their bikes, fishing, playing soccer, and dining outside at restaurants in their winter coats—simply living their lives oblivious to the wind, rain and chill. Fortunately for us the weather would often improve by afternoon and we could enjoy a bit of sunshine.

Our last day was to be a “day spent in leisure” in Amsterdam. Not for us! My brother arranged for a friend, Johann, to drive us to the village of Herwijnen in Gelderland. Our father, Gysbert Vroegh, was born in that village and at the age of one year had emigrated to the United States with his parents. He celebrated his first birthday and also learned to walk on the boat as it sailed to America.

Herwijnen is a very small village and we found the church where our father had been baptized. Good fortune was with us because we noticed a couple out for their morning walk

and approached them.

“Do you speak or understand English?” was our first of many questions.

Although the lady was hesitant the gentleman was willing to take a risk and give it a try. Johann helped with translating. To our surprise the man had keys for the church, and soon we were inside, admiring the beautiful interior. According to the couple the small Reformed Church was doing well. Morning and evening services were well attended at this “kerk.”

Finally we asked, “Do you know any “Vroeghs?”

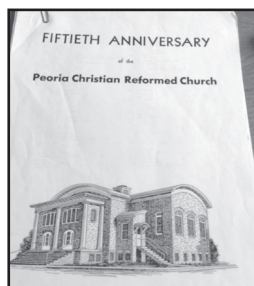
“Of course,” and soon we were on the way into the village. After several stops—nothing. Then we knocked on Willem and Maria Vroegh’s door. They seemed to be waiting for us.

“Kom binnen.” (Come in) Somehow they did not consider us strangers. With Johann’s help we tried to make connections. Willem was retired, but had worked as a shipbuilder. Maria brewed a wonderful pot of coffee. Their house was Dutch clean and flowers bloomed on her window sills and in her backyard.

Obviously Willem and Maria had done a bit of research as to where some of their Vroegh relatives might be in the US. Maria brought out a box that contained some correspondence and other items. As she was rummaging through the contents, suddenly I spotted a picture of the Peoria Christian Reformed Church and part of the booklet that commemorated its 50th anniversary. I was pleased to find my name in there along with that of my parents. I told them that Stella Pothoven—the person who had sent them the items—had once lived just down the road from me.

We wonder. Are Willem and Maria our kin? We are pretty sure they are, but the family tree is still a bit of a mystery. In the cemetery behind the church many of the stones had the “Vroegh” name on them. Were some of them related to us? It really doesn’t matter for we felt the warmth and enjoyed our visit to our “roots.”

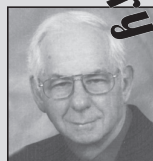
-Wilma Blom



Marla Ozinga grew up in the Peoria area and sought employment at various places. She became affiliated with Passageway and was a valued, respected member. She enjoyed reading, cross stitching and doing puzzles and had a love for children and animals. She was a trustworthy, faithful friend to her family and had a loving, non-judgmental attitude.



In Loving Memory



Donald Vander Molen lived most of his life in the Peoria area. He married Rachel and over time they welcomed two sons: Dan and Jeff. He was in the Air National Guard and later farmed and/or worked in this area except for eight years in the Phoenix area. He was a member of/and participated in the Peoria Christian Reformed Church.

Peoria Partyline Changing Hands or Ending?

Due to staffing changes this may be the last issue of the Partyline. Peoria CRC Council would like to see the Partyline continue, however it realizes that certain skill sets are needed to produce the paper in its current layout.

Hopefully the Partyline can continue in some format in the future. If you are interested/willing to help, contact Glen Fynaardt, 641-637-4317.

We heartily thank the Peoria Partyline team for their work over the years. -Peoria CRC Council

As the editor from the beginning, I’d like to say “thank you” to everyone involved in making the PPL the success that it was—those who let us tell your story, writers, and readers! Maybe a new team can be organized. If not, we’ll all be saying “good bye” to a dear “friend” who has been a welcome visitor in our homes for the past 11 years. It’s been sort of like waiting for the phone to ring in anticipation every 3 months—and then getting to “listen in” on the partyline! We were brought closer together as neighbors. And that was good! -Marilee VW



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

Business Services

VAN'S ELECTRIC & CONSTRUCTION, INC.
John Van Wyngarden
625-4280
 Electrical • Plumbing • HVAC
 Geothermal • Radiant Floor Heat
 Brock & Conrad American
 Grain Bins

Skunk River Restoration & Repair
 Dealer

Jim De Bruin 641.780.6114

Peterson Tiling & Excavation

"Quality work at affordable prices"

- Tile installation
- Terraces
- Waterways
- Basements
- Sewer

Call Jesse Peterson at 641-780-6800

For Sale

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

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



Old Township Quarry

In the 1950's the Pella Limestone and Durham Quarry Company operated several rock quarries in and around Pella. The rock was used by Mahaska County for road rock and the lime was used to spread on farm land. The company was run by Arnold Van Zee and his brother-in-law, Robert Monsma.

In 1954, the company opened a rock quarry on the Jon De Nooy farm by the South Skunk River between Pella and Peoria. This is where Brad and Cheryl Veenstra live today.

Jonathan De Nooy remembers when the quarry workers prepared to set off dynamite charges. "One of them would come to our house and tell us the exact time of detonation" he said, "When the explosive charge was released, small pieces of rock would fall on our farm land. The land was planted in alfalfa so we could scrape the pieces of rock off. I can remember riding on the blade in front of the tractor so our weight helped do a better job of scraping." (Probably not OSHA approved)

Jon also remembers that the dump trucks—used to load the chunks of rock—did not have doors on them. He speculates



Darrell Veenstra
 AGENT/ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Lynnville, Newton

Ph: 641.792.7316

fax: 641.792.0200

Cell: 641-780-8106

dveenstra@iisnewton.com

- Sheep Shearing Continued

getting older. Most—including myself—have other full-time jobs. The western part of the US has more full-time shearers. I cover most of the state and do a fair amount of shearing in the western part of Iowa."

Rick said Suffolks are his favorite breed to shear. "They have no wool on their belly or legs, so they take less time to shear." He was out of luck at the Bloms, though, because all of their sheep are white-faced ewes, with plenty of wool to shear.

The Bloms are one of approximately 4700 sheep producers in the state of Iowa. That number ranks Iowa first or second—along with Texas—in the number of sheep producers.

"Our ewes tend to be quite prolific," says Sharon, "and we have had quite a few twins and several triplets each year. One of the ewes really out did herself this year, though, delivering a set of healthy quadruplets." It's the third time for quads in their 35 years of lambing.

-Harv & Sharon Blom

CoLine Sells Goalsetter Stock

After several months of deliberations, Dale Brand announced at a companywide meeting on Monday, Sept. 28, that Goalsetter Systems, Inc. was teaming up with Escalade Sports to become a powerhouse in the sporting goods industry. Effective Sept. 30, 2015, the stock of Goalsetter was sold to Escalade Sports. A long-term manufacturing agreement has been secured for Co-Line to continue manufacturing the Made-in-the-USA Goalsetter brand, just as it has for the past 24 years. "Co-Line is very excited about this transaction with Escalade Sports," Dale Brand said. "They will be excellent stewards of the Goalsetter brand, and we will be able to focus on our core business and what we do best—exceptional quality metal fabrication. For full story and details, go to this website: colinemfg.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/CLP_2-2014.pdf

this may have allowed for a quick exit when needed. The chunks of rock were transported to the crusher which created clouds of dust. "Everything was covered with rock dust until the rain cleaned it off," he said. The dirt—that was moved from the top of the rock layer—was moved to the east and it ranged in color from yellow to white.

There was a fatality in the later years of operation. A laborer had the dump truck box raised so he could put oil in the reservoir. He accidentally hit the cable or lever that lowered the box of the truck and was killed.

The quarry was in operation until the early 1960's. It was closed due to the cost of excavation as they had to dig more deeply to reach the rock as well as the fact that they would have had to take additional farm land.

-Nancy Van Wyk