

# Peoria Partyline



... connecting the extended Peoria community

Volume 11, No. 1

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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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Helen De Jong:  
**641-637-4332**

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with questions or  
submissions:

[peoria.ia.news@gmail.com](mailto:peoria.ia.news@gmail.com)

Online issue: [www.peoriacr.org](http://www.peoriacr.org)

## Partyline Delights Us for a Decade

Has the Peoria Partyline been a part of our lives for ten years already? Yes, the first copy was dated April 2005 which means it's time for a CELEBRATION! We're dedicating this issue towards that end and we'd like to include you in the fun. We'll be looking back, challenging your memories about things you've learned along the way, as well as tweaking your curiosity for the future.

Over the years, our team has centered on one important question when choosing stories or finalizing each issue for the printer. "Will we or did we learn something new?" If the answer was "yes" then we knew we were successful. We've also kept in mind our original aim for the newsletter. The April 2005 copy focused on the parallels between early "partyline" telephones (and how they helped connect rural people) and the goal for the new newsletter to connect the community in and around Peoria. "It will be our goal to share news, communicate information, offer humor and advice, and in general promote care and support between neighbors." Considering the success we've witnessed over the past ten years, as well as positive feedback from our readers, it appears that goal has been—and will continue to be—an excellent standard to aim for.

So, here we go! Sit back and enjoy this anniversary issue packed with intrigue, interesting stories, and news to talk about with your neighbors. There's even two extra pages for two times the fun as we celebrate together!  
-the Peoria Partyline team

## Chicken Comeback (Part 2)

With the departure of all animals—except some cattle, a few cats and a dog—from their farm, Wilma Blom began to think of their place as kind of a non-farm. Then one day a grandson said, "Grandpa, I wish you had some chickens." Grandpa was NOT interested and had a long list of "impossibles." No place to house them, winters in Iowa are not friendly to fowl, and that all in all it was a really bad idea.

For whatever reason a grandson is not easily dissuaded and the idea continued to be tossed around. Then came the fateful phone call. In science class they were hatching some chicks, and they were "free" to anyone who could find a good home for them. "They would be willing to deliver it to the farm," said our grandson, "and it would be a start." What is a grandpa to do?



And so it was that Roger (the chick) arrived a few years ago on Memorial Day week-end. The trip from St. Louis was a bit lengthy for Roger and he obviously peeped without a pause. The travelers were a bit unnerved from the incessant noise.

Now a friendless chick is a sad thing to see, and in time a few trips were made to the Kalona Sale Barn. Soon Roger had fourteen playmates—Winifred, Roxanne, Hildagard, and

Blanche to name just a few—to help him feel at home.

Things evolve. At Christmas the gift under the tree for Grandpa—believe it or not—was an incubator. The once sheep shed slowly transformed into a chicken condo of sorts with several rooms, lovely roosts, and heat lamps when needed. It was necessary to admit that Roger was not about to be a rooster, but a fine looking hen. Yet it was decided to not change the name. You may recall that there was once a song about "A Boy Named Sue." So a hen named Roger just is.

Even I have learned a few things. It's been necessary to rooster shop or rooster trade



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## Painting a Perfect Pastime

Wilma Van't Sant is filled with a lot of creative energy and painting is one of her many outlets, along with quilting, crocheting, knitting, sewing, and others. Wilma describes herself as a mostly self-taught artist. "I loved to draw as a kid and in my senior year there was a class that included lots of different art work, which I enjoyed," she says.

After she and Ed moved to the farm she participated in an art class for two years with a retired art teacher. She and several other ladies met at the teacher's home once a week to paint together. "With a growing family and work on the farm," she says, "there soon weren't enough hours in the day to continue painting, but the interest has always been there."



In the 1970's Wilma entered one of her paintings in an art show in New Sharon and it won a sweepstakes prize. She's also displayed at the Oskaloosa Fair and on the walls at Jefferson Place for several years.

"My favorite medium is oil and acrylic," continues Wilma. "Over the years I have sold a couple of paintings, but mostly I enjoy giving away my paintings to people who enjoy them." That "gifting" tendency was perhaps a Godsend because on May 18, 2006, she lost almost all of her paintings when fire destroyed their farmhouse.

When asked what she most enjoys about her art work, Wilma responds, "When I look around and see all that God has created, then when I try to create something with my painting, it makes me feel close to God."

One of her paintings traveled all the way to Holland to her grandmother's house and then made its way back after she passed away. She remembers, "Something special for me was creating a painting of my Grandmother Oskam's home in Abcoude, Holland. I painted from a photo I took of the house when I visited there in the 1970's." The most meaningful art work Wilma has created so far was the home farm scene (pictured below) as a memorial on her husband Ed's tombstone.



Wilma hopes to continue painting and developing her skills in the days ahead. She is also open to trying her hand at different types of painting.

We wish you well, Wilma, in pursuing your God-given talents.  
-Sharon Blom



## Two Township Homes to Get New Families



Two houses located right next to each other up on the ridge west of Harry Vander Hart's farm, will be getting new families. One of the houses used to belong to Arnold and Ruth Ozinga. The other's most recent owner was the Stringer family.

Phil and Laura Stam (and their two children Hannah and Luke) just recently took ownership of the Ozinga house. A large family from Pella will be moving into the other home, pending sale of their present home.

Within time, we'll get to meet these families through the "Neighbors" section in the Partyline. Word is that a lot of children will be living in these two houses—and if that's true, the quiet neighborhood will soon be alive with noise and activity. We're very excited to welcome these new families to our Township.

## Gravestone Mystery



What would you do if you suddenly discovered that the smooth slab of stone you had been using for years as part of your sidewalk was actually an overturned gravestone?

This really happened to one local family.

Was this actually someone's grave? If so, who? Had you been disrespectful of a grave site for many years?

Should you keep it secret? If word got out, would you risk having to display the stone right on your front yard?

What should you do?

Watch for the next edition of the Partyline when "the rest of the story" will be revealed.

### Words from happy readers:

- Very well written and lots of information. Keep up the good work!
- We enjoy the paper very much!
- Thank you for sharing the Peoria Partyline with us. It is truly delightful and we enjoy it very much!
- My love for Peoria remains thanks to your paper.

## An Ancestral Home

In April, 2014, Jon and Doris Nibbelink went to England to visit their daughter Julie and family. From there, they all traveled to Gelderland in the Netherlands to the Nibbelink ancestral home.

They were able to stay in the house built for the Nibbelinks in 1723. The original home on the farm was destroyed by fire. People from the local village came to help them rebuild. To thank them for their help when the new home was completed, the Nibbelinks invited the villagers to the farm for a supper. While the villagers were at the farm partying, sparks from the forge used by the village blacksmith ignited his building and the fire quickly spread to many other buildings in the village. So while celebrating one new home, many other homes were destroyed. The church where ancestral records were kept was also destroyed, so the birth, marriage, and death records of people who lived in that area prior to 1723 were also lost.

Sometime between 1605 and 1625 the Nibbelink farm of 10 hectares (about 25 acres) was split into 2 smaller "estates." One Nibbelink son got the original farm house and about 7.5 hectares. He was known as Groot (large) Nibbelink. Klein (small) Nibbelink received 2.5 hectares and a new farm house.

Today the farm house of Groot Nibbelink includes the apartment where Jon and Doris and family stayed. As was typical back in the 1700s, the barn is attached to the family's living quarters. Both the house and the barn section have been restored and remodeled. The "barn" is now a quick stop



restaurant, a "koffieboerderij" for bikers who pass by the home on a busy bike trail. Part of what had been the barn is available for indoor seating for their guests, and the rest is their kitchen and a display area for their "fast food" items. There is also a large outdoor playground with seating around the perimeter

that can accommodate up to 300 guests for receptions. Kids love it! You can see pictures of the complex at [www.koffieboerderij.nl](http://www.koffieboerderij.nl)

Buildings and roads that were named in the 1700s retain those same names today. The "Groot Nibbelink" name is posted on the barn/restaurant. The road running past the place is Nibbelink Laan (lane). The woods nearby is "Nibbelink Woods".

The name "Nibbelink" probably originally meant "wrath" and "brave."

The "ink" meant "belonging to," usually a father's name but it could also refer to a certain location like a house, farm, river, etc. Often, when their descendants left those farms, the "Groot" and "Klein" designations were dropped. Jon's great grandfather is buried in Peoria, and his gravestone lists him as "Stoffel Groot Nibbelink. Evidently Jon's grandfather, Gerrit William, decided that Groot (large) somehow did not apply, or he simply got tired of such a long name. In 1908, he purchased the farm where Jon and Doris live, and the deed to the farm



lists him as G. W. Nibbelink. As you can see, names change. The "Groot" part has been dropped, but the "Nibbelink" name remains!

The caretakers of the koffieboerderij are not Nibbelink descendants, but have done lots of research into the Nibbelink family. They kindly gave lots of printed information to Jon and Doris. However, since all that information is in Dutch, they aren't able to read it. Anyone willing to translate?

-Doris Nibbelink

### -Chicken Comeback Continued

with other chicken farmers at times, and not all roosters are nice. There have been several hatchings with a moderate amount of success. Twenty one days is the magic number for the time it takes an egg to hatch; it takes more than a few hours for the just born chick to turn into a cute chick; and different hatchings seem to display very different personalities.

Now for the rest of the story. Chickens lay eggs and going into the egg business for a profit was never a goal for us. Consequently fresh farm eggs began to find their way to the tables of friends and family as well as to the local food shelf.

And yes, the chicken house needs cleaning, eggs need to be gathered, and hens get broody. It's called going full circle.

I must add that recently the same grandson said, "Grandpa, I think it would be fun to have a goat." And Grandpa said, "That's not going to happen!" I have no doubt that this time he meant it.

-Wilma Blom



The Wichhart home was purchased by Gary and Linda Steenhoek as an investment. They like the location and proximity to the river. The current resident is there to help with renovation. After 2-3 months it will be ready to rent out





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

## Business Services

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Peoria Christian School Announces:

## Kindergarten Round-Up

Join Us for a Day of Learning and Discovery!

Wednesday March 11th

8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.



### What Peoria Has to Offer

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**Call to Reserve your Spot 641-625-4131**

## For Sale

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



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

"As a family, we want to reflect Christ in all we say, do and are." That's the first line of the Ochsner family's purpose statement which describes the values that guide their life together. That life is a busy one for Brian and Becky and their four boys: Ezra (7), Elliot (5), Zachary (4), and Harris (6 months), who live west of Peoria on Cordova Ave.

The Ochsner (pronounced Ox'-ner) family moved to their acreage in late 2013 from Sully, where Brian serves as pastor of Sully Christian Reformed Church. Both Brian and Becky grew up on Iowa farms—Brian near Maurice and Becky near Oskaloosa—and want to raise their family in the country too. They love having room for their boys to run, for Becky to garden, and Brian to hunt. They even rent some ground on the Des Moines River and do some farming on the side.

Before moving back to Iowa in 2010, Rev. Ochsner served a church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, after receiving his M.Div. degree from Calvin Seminary in 2006. Becky graduated from Calvin Seminary too, earning an M.A. in Worship. Both are Dordt College graduates, but they met on a church league softball diamond in Oskaloosa. Ask them about that sometime.

A talented photographer, Becky has her own business: Becky Ochsner Photography. She has stepped back from doing portraits for now but still does farm scenes and land-

scapes. Examples of her artistic photographs are viewable at [www.iowa-farmphotography.com](http://www.iowa-farmphotography.com). She loves to cook, organizing her recipes by the time of the year. She is hoping to kayak down the Skunk River this summer.

Camping at Pike's Peak State Park near Decorah in their 1971 Airstream camper is a favorite family activity. Ezra likes to ride his dirt bike, Elliot likes to go to school, Zachary likes to "play and clean up," and Harris likes to "bend things on the floor," according to his big brother. They all enjoy using the iPad, especially to play Minecraft. Surprisingly, the boys also like Brussel sprouts, asparagus, and other veggies—evidence of their parents' gardening skills, cooking abilities, and persistence.

Brian and Becky feel it is important to teach their children responsibility, and the four little faces peering over the edge of their kitchen table during this interview are obviously eager learners. The Ochsner family's goal to "make our home a place of warmth, laughter and purpose" is actively pursued in this corner of Richland Township.

-Deb Bruxvoort



# CELEBRATING 10 Years



## TEN YEAR MEMORY QUIZ

If you can answer all these questions without peeking—or looking them up online—we want to hear from you! Email [peoria.ia.news@gmail.com](mailto:peoria.ia.news@gmail.com) and we'll come up with something special for you. (Yes, this is the honor system!)

### Trivia from the past ten years of Peoria Partyline issues:

1. Marilee Vander Wal (our editor) is one of two original committee members still part of the team. Can you name the other person?
2. What church celebrated their 100th anniversary in 2005—the year the first issue of the PPL came out?
3. How many active/inactive cemeteries are there in Richland Township?
4. In December of 2005, who was the oldest resident of Richland Township? And what was unique about her birth date?
5. Who from our township won a cookie contest and was on the Today Show?
6. A group of seniors came to Peoria for their class trip. Where were they from, who was their teacher, and where did they sleep?
7. Who can tell you about water-witching, as he himself has done it?
8. What landmark in the Township may have gotten its name because it lured young people to Pella and away from church?
9. What event in July, 2007, brought huge crowds to Peoria, lots of reminiscing, and lots of fun?
10. What sports team represented Peoria for 20 years and who sponsored them?
11. Who was the compassionate, country vet who served our Township from the 30's to the 70's, and what critters did he hold a grudge against?
12. What terrible crime happened in Lower Grove in 1867, and what guest writer wrote the story for us?
13. An inventor from Peoria had a patent approved for an early design of a machine that we all use in our homes today. What was the machine?
14. What establishment in “downtown” Peoria had an annual “Ham Day?”
15. Who raised longhorn cattle for several years?
16. Who were married in a wonderful country wedding in their barn?
17. Who worked in horrible conditions—in winter weather—on a farm in Ukraine for 3 ½ weeks?
18. Who sponsors the newest area tractor ride?
19. During Lark's Club meetings the children often got rowdy. Where did one child run back and forth in order to avoid being caught by the “blind man's bluff?”
20. Who has sewed over 20 quilts?

- Answers on reverse side

## ANY FLOPS?

The only idea we've had—that comes even close to a flop—would be the idea of using “story spotters” who would tip us off from different areas in the township if they heard of a happening or interesting story.

So far, since we set up some spotters in 2008, not a single story has been generated this way . . . to the best of our knowledge. Yet we never ran out of stories over the next 6 years. Seems everyone in the township is a “story spotter” of sorts! THANKS!

## STARTLING STORIES

Although a small spot in rural Iowa, our township has had its own share of stories that really got readers' attention. Here's a few we remember. If you'd like to go back and reread the stories, go online ([www.peoriacrc.org](http://www.peoriacrc.org), Resources, Peoria Partyline) and look for the **Volume** and **Number** listed below.

1. Peoria Church's pastor saved a Methodist stuck up on a roof. (V1#2)
  2. Forty-one fat cattle escaped from a local farm bringing out a “posse” of neighbors to round them up. (V1#3)
  3. A new building—with what looked like a vault—was being built in Peoria where a chicken house used to stand. (V2#2)
  4. A farm house was set on fire from a burning tractor. (V2#3)
  5. A huge ice storm turned Peoria into a ghost town. (V3#2)
  6. It was a narrow miss when a tornado passed across the township and headed for Co-Line. (V3#4)
  7. Life Flight came to rescue a man who got his foot caught in a corn picker. (V4#1)
  8. A horse was hit and killed by a UPS truck. (V5#1)
  9. Late one night a Life Flight helicopter had to make an emergency landing in Lower Grove. (V8#2)
  10. A midnight house fire woke up the sleepy town of Peoria. (V9#1)
  11. An 18-wheeler took a nose-dive crash into a field along the main road near the river. (V9#1)
  12. Strong winds left damage in and around Peoria. (V10#3)
  13. A lady almost lost her life in another local house fire. (V10#3)
- We wouldn't be able to feature stories like these if you didn't let us know when you see something happening. Keep up the good work!**

