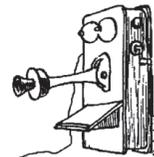


# Peoria Partyline



connecting the extended Peoria community

Volume 6. No. 1

March 2010

## Short n' Long of it . . .

- Pg. 1..... Slykhuis Sale
- Pg. 2..... Community Events
- Pg. 2..... Roll Over
- Pg. 3..... Beekeeper Part 3
- Pg. 3..... In Memory
- Pg. 4..... Stockyards Story
- Pg. 4..... Summer Dreams

Comments from Readers  
Page 3



Childhood Dream  
Page 2



## Peoria Partyline Mailing List

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

Call

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

E-mail us  
with questions or  
submissions:

[peoria.ia.news@hotmail.com](mailto:peoria.ia.news@hotmail.com)  
Online issue: [www.peoriacrc.org](http://www.peoriacrc.org)

## Slykhuis Sale Successful

On November 21, 2009, the tools and equipment of an old Peoria business were sold. The blacksmith shop—though closed for many years—may be traced back to a shop that was started in 1879. According to a Peoria history book, written by James Dahm and Dorthy Van Kooten, the Oskaloosa Herald credits “J.S. Wharton and Sons for erecting a blacksmith shop in Peoria,” in the spring of that year. Over the years the business continued in several different locations. Gerrit Slykhuis became the final owner in 1961 when he purchased the property, a house, and some additional ground nearby. The business thrived under Gerrit until technological advances gave him the choice of growing or closing. He closed but kept the shop for personal projects until his death in 2009. At that point the decision was made to sell it.

Before Gerrit died he said, “It will be up to my nephews to get everything ready to sell.” The nephews got right to work. Their first order of business was to clean up the area around the shop. Starting in July they attacked grass, weeds, and dead trees. Then the old house was burned and nine to ten pickup loads of scrap iron were hauled away. Finally they turned their attention to the old shop.

There they faced an enormous job since the building—upstairs, downstairs, and out buildings—was packed full of items. Small items were loaded on hay racks and bigger items were lined up out back. Some of the biggest and heaviest shop equipment stayed right where it was.

The whole process of preparing for the sale was really tough for Wilma (Gerrit’s wife). “It brought back many memories of Gerrit working in his shop,” she said. “He spent many hours there working on repairs for others or fixing and making things for himself. We both wanted children but it wasn’t in God’s plans. With no children to take care of the property or work in the shop, I had no choice but to sell.”



*It was a difficult yet exciting day for Wilma.*



*Two auction rings were going at the same time to accommodate the crowd.*

The sale also presented a challenge to Tri County Auction. Over 1400 items waited to be sold. Auctioneers Ray and Brad Veenstra decided to do two things. First—sell in two different rings and second—keep the sale moving as fast as they could. If the sale was to be done in six to seven hours, at least 100 items had to be sold by each auctioneer per hour. In addition the large crowd made it difficult to see bidders, parking was at a premium, and the rarity of some

items made it difficult to know where to start the bids.

It was a very interesting sale. Some of the items sold included a single shot .410 or a .22 rifle for \$110, a .22 rifle with a homemade stock for \$210, a hit and miss oiler went for \$8, and a coal bucket for \$4.50. An IH hand crank corn sheller moved for \$80, a harness sewing machine fetched \$200, and a fancier one went for over \$400. An IH F-20 that they couldn’t get started brought \$800, and an IH 350 that Gerrit had bought from an uncle brought \$3500. In the shop an old metal bender went for \$75, an old wood plane brought



*A large crowd stayed for hours to take in the whole sale.*

*-continued on page 4*



Neighbors are much more than just names!  
Grab a cup of coffee and let's read about a childhood dream!

Randy and Jodi De Vries moved into their new house—along Dean Avenue, just north of Peoria—at the end of June. This was Randy's favorite place as a child, the land of his grandparents, Harold and Leona De Vries. "When growing up, I enjoyed helping out at the farm," said Randy. "Even more I enjoyed hunting there with my father, Dennis De Vries." It's always been Randy's dream to move to this land. "God has really blessed us, to be able to build my childhood dream place right here," he says with a smile.

Randy grew up in Pella. After receiving an electrical degree at Northwest Community College, Randy worked for Gritters Electric in Pella for three years. He started on his own with CenterPoint Electric in Sully, in March of 2000. CenterPoint Electric does residential, commercial, industrial and repair work.

Jodi grew up in Sully. After receiving a two year secretarial degree at Dordt College, she worked for Vermeer. Now she is a bookkeeper for the family business. Jodi loves music and plays piano. She is the music coordinator at the Sully Christian Reformed Church and for a number of years she enjoyed

coaching high school softball.

What does Randy like to do? "He lives

and breathes hunting," pipes in Jodi. Any kind of hunting—mainly deer and turkey. If you are ever at their place, you should check out his trophy room and mounts. Randy is also the present board president of Sully Christian School.

Randy and Jodi were high school sweethearts, dating since their freshman year at Pella Christian High School. They have been married since 1996. Their children are delightful and enjoy life. Colby (8), Tysen (4) and Jessa (1) keep mom and dad busy. Colby and Tysen know where the snacks are in the cupboards. Jessa is a happy toddler.

The family is adjusting to life in the country for the first time. They enjoy the scenery, and Randy already knows his neighbors, some of whom he worked for when younger. We hope that all of you feel at home in this area. It is good to have you as neighbors.

-John Gorter



## Upcoming Community Events

March 6 Hostess Supper at the Peoria Christian School

March 10 Prayer service for crops, work, and nation at the Peoria Church, 7:00 p.m.

March 13 Turn clocks ahead one hour before going to bed

April 2 Good Friday communion service at the Peoria Church, 7:30 p.m.

April 4 Easter worship service at the Peoria Church, 9:30 a.m.

May 13 Ascension Day worship service at the Peoria Church, 7:30 p.m.

May 20 Eighth grade graduation at the Peoria Christian School

May 31 Memorial Day service in the Peoria Cemetery, 9:00 a.m.



## Roll Over

In early October a grain truck, full of harvested corn, spilled its load in an accident in our township. The truck was south bound on old Hwy 102, and just before Cordova Ave., it went off the shoulder. Amazingly the tractor and trailer completely flipped over and landed back on their wheels, still hooked up. The tractor was setting on Cordova road while the trailer was in the ditch. Both were considered a total loss. In the accident, close to 1100 bushels of corn were spilled. The co-owner of the truck, Don Goemaat, said "There wasn't a kernel of corn left in the trailer."

Two vehicles that were following the Goemaat truck stopped to assist. When the "good Samaritans" didn't see the driver, they were afraid to look in the smashed cab because of what they might find. The truck driver heard them talking and called to them that he was okay. He was saved because he dove for the passenger side of the truck.



*A grain spill similar to the one we witnessed in our township.*

He was taken to the hospital where he was treated and released without any serious injuries.

According to Don, another truck and a grain vac was brought in to clean up the corn—which took two to three hours. "We had trouble getting the corn out of the tall grass," said Don. "Because of that we had to leave about 230 bushels on the ground. We feel very fortunate. Equipment can be replaced but a person can't." -Terry Bandstra

## The Beekeeper and His Wife (Part 3)



Continuing the story . . . In comparison to John, Ruth had an even temperament and in retrospect was very patient. When it was time to extract the honey, she was a willing helper. She also served as secretary/treasurer for the local rural schools in the district. It was her job to write the pay checks for the rural teachers and often commented that they indeed made “good money.”

To reach their cabin home you needed to open a farm gate, head north down a dirt path that was wide enough for a car, and cross a makeshift bridge. Their coupe was usually parked under a large elm tree, or when the weather was unfavorable it had its spot on our farmstead.



Inside their compact cabin you would find a gas cooking stove, a gas refrigerator, a gas heater, and a sink—with a faucet—that was attached to a large tank that collected rain water. Their couch stood near an easy chair, radio, and a black typewriter. There was not a lot of empty space. They never did have electricity but John produced his own power with a Delco plant.



In the unfinished shop stood a primitive bathroom, but it was a step up from the outhouses familiar to so many of us. There was a bathtub—without hot water—and a bathroom stool—but not the kind that you could flush. Remember, John was resourceful! Also fashioned in the shop was a summer bedroom—a bedstead surrounded by a heavy curtain. The shop was unheated so during the winter months their couch in the living area was transformed into a bed each evening.

The social scene for the Valkenburgs was limited. Ruth could not drive, so John would take her to Pella for supplies—a trip that often included a visit with friends or

relatives. They also went out on Sundays to the Brethren Church in Pella. Now and then a brave driver could be seen negotiating the trip to their cabin home for a friendly visit. On occasion the Valkenburgs would head for Keokuk—Ruth’s home town—to visit her family there for a few days. It was a lucky day when one of us (kids) would be invited to join them on the Keokuk trip. Their interaction with our family was daily and always welcome.

The busiest of times was the fall when the extractor was readied and the honey combs loaded inside. By turning a handle the extractor would spin and the honey was removed from the combs. Large 5 gallon cans were filled with the golden sweetness. It was during this time that many rural school students made their annual field trip. To them it seemed like a place of magic. John was an excellent teacher and would give an interesting, animated lesson on the bees—workers, drones, the queen—and of course royal jelly. The engineering of the extractor was also explained. Each child enjoyed chewing on a sweet piece of honey comb.

A good deal of the Valkenburg honey was sold to the local Pella bakeries. However, during years of excess, the 5 gallon cans were sent to Chicago and Nebraska.

Many of us have our favorite “spot” and so did the Valkenburgs. That spot was their porch swing, not on a porch, but hung from a high branch of an enormous elm tree. It was there they spent countless hours, talking and not talking. All of this was “once upon a time.” There was a time to be a beekeeper and a time to refrain from beekeeping. Over the years John’s health waned, particularly his eyesight. Sometime in the late 60’s they moved to Keokuk where they lived their last years in the care of a family friend.

John and Ruth were a part of not only our everyday life but every holiday and birthday. Mere words cannot express how much they meant to us. We remember countless hours looking through our north window to see if they were headed up the hill with their kerosene lantern. In our memory bank we have a patchwork of memories and stories and more stories.... once again all colorful. -Wilma Blom



### Comments from readers:

“I enjoy the Partyline very much!”

“We really enjoy the paper! We pass it on to our daughter after we are done with it.”

“I always enjoy reading the Peoria Partyline which my sister forwards to me!”

“I love your little newsletter. Since I grew up there I am proud of my little town!”

“What a great idea this paper has been! It’s great to keep connected to everyone. Everyone does a great job!”

“I really enjoy this little paper! Keep up the good work!”



John Boyd, of New Sharon, passed away Tuesday, October 13, 2009 at the Mahaska Hospital in Oskaloosa. John, son of Homer

and Betty Boyd, was born in 1943 on the family farm near New Sharon. He attended New Sharon High School and began farming around the New Sharon and Peoria areas after graduation. He operated heavy equipment, was an order buyer of cattle in the New Sharon area, and he, his wife Victoria, and their son Stacy attended the Lower Grove Church in Richland Township.



John enjoyed deer hunting, coyote hunting, fishing and going out to eat with friends and family.

His memory will be cherished by his wife Vicki of New Sharon; his son; and many friends.



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

## Business Services



**Van Dyke Repair Inc.**, General repair on tractors and combines. Wayne Van Dyke, 641-625-4146.

**Skunk River Restoration** Repaint all makes of tractors. Jim De Bruin 641-780-6114

**Peoria Trailer Sales**, Dennis Rozenboom is now selling H & H and Calico Stock Trailers, 641-780-1886.

### For Sale

**For Sale: Hay, grass/alfalfa mix.** Large rounds and small square bales. 625-4122.

## A Stockyards Story (Part 2)

Continuing the story . . . changes are a part of every business, and Peoria Stockyards was no different. In 1972, Jake Vander Molen decided to leave the business. He continued in the cattle buying business and also clerked sales for Tri-County Auction. Bob and Dale Deur stepped forward to buy the semis and they did the hauling for the stockyards until the early 1980's.

Within time another original owner, Jupe Deur, also left the business and Mel Deur was left to carry on alone until the business was transferred to Wilbur Veenstra in the late 70's. He and his son Mike purchased trucks in the early 1990's.

In the 70's the stockyards offered three hog buying locations—Peoria, Pella, and New Sharon. Each office had its own manager and Rosemary Schmidt, who worked there from 1970 to 1980, did the books for all three locations.

The livestock industry—and the stockyards—faced many changes over the years, as many small hog producers quit and others got bigger and had more marketing options. The Peoria office was the first to close, although it would be reopened for a couple of years later on. The New Sharon office was next to close, and the Pella office—which at that time was located in the old Pella Sale barn north of town—was sold and closed in 1993. From 1982 to 1985, there was also a hog buying station established in Otley. Mike sold out in 1994 and Wilbur continued to buy hogs out of Peoria until his untimely death in November of 1996.

Peoria Stockyards officially went out of business on January 1 of 1997. The only reminder of the business in its heyday is the building that still stands in its original location in Peoria and, I'm sure, an old softball uniform that still hangs in the back of someone's closet with the words, "Peoria Stockyards."

-Warren Van Wyngarden

-Slykbuis Sale continued

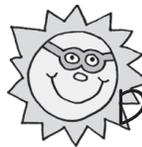
\$60, a lathe to make wooden axles (with an axle in it) brought \$425, and a pulley-and-shaft system that could run several different machines sold for \$450. After the sale a man was overheard telling Wilma that "there was a lot of history sold at this auction!" So very true, and possibly why one bidder bought an old Richland Auto sign for \$800.



*There were vehicles parked all along Peoria's streets—a sight not often seen in a small town.*

The shop itself and the ground has not been sold yet. But there are several interested parties and will probably be sold privately.

-Terry Bandstra and Marilee Vander Wal



## Dreaming of Summer



I'm dreaming of warm sandy beaches.  
I'm dreaming of days by the pool.  
I'm dreaming of fun in the afternoon sun,  
and week after week of no school.



I'm thinking of swim suits and sprinklers,  
imagining lemonade stands.  
I'm lost in a daydream of squirt guns and ice cream  
and plenty of time on my hands.



I'm picturing baseball and hot dogs,  
Envisioning games at the park,  
and how it stays light until late every night,  
and seems like it never gets dark.



I long to ride skateboards and scooters.  
I want to wear t-shirts and shorts.  
I'd go for a hike, or I'd ride on my bike,  
or play lots of summertime sports.



My reverie turns to a yearning  
to draw on the driveway with chalk.  
It's really a bummer to daydream of summer  
while shoveling snow from the walk.

-Kenn Nesbitt

