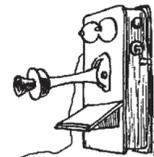


# Peoria Partyline



connecting the extended Peoria community

Volume 7. No. 3

September 2011

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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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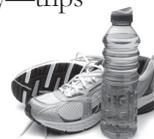
peoria.ia.news@hotmail.com

Online issue: www.peoriacrc.org

## Fun Run for Reflection and Remembering

"About three years ago I was challenged by my family to do whatever was necessary to take better care of myself," said Kevin Nikkel, "and that was the start of making some serious changes in my exercise and diet habits." He began running two to four miles a day, went through "fast food withdrawal," and decided to set some goals since he would soon be celebrating twenty-five years of marriage and entering a new decade. "I thought turning fifty was somewhat of a milestone mark in my life," he said, "and a good time to reflect on my past."

One of those goals was directly linked to Peoria because that's where Kevin grew up. "I remember when the road was paved from Peoria to Pella," he continues, "and when that happened a whole new world opened up to us. I don't remember many—if any—trips to Pella before that. The gravel road had made Pella seem so far away." He remembers riding bicycle on the new road (before they allowed cars to drive on it) and discovering that Pella really WAS a long ways away! "I would have never thought of running that far back then," said Kevin, "so I decided it would be kind of special to run it this year. I also wanted to take the time to stop and reflect on life. My childhood memories are special—and many—but if you don't ever take the time to stop, turn around, and think about them, then you forget about them."



The July 9 run was nine miles and Kevin decided right away that he wanted to run the first few miles by himself—just to reflect and soak it all in. "It was really cool," he recalls. Starting up by the Peoria school, he peeked around the corner to check out the softball field, and then he headed down the hill remembering how 'big' everything had seemed as a kid—the houses, the yards, the gardens, the feed mill, and the blacksmith shop where they used to get their bikes fixed. "I was planning on running and not stopping," said

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### In Loving Memory



Vernon Peter Van Gorp (the youngest of seven) grew up in the Sandridge vicinity of this township. Since his father died when he was five, he began farming as soon as he was old enough to help his mother. He and his brother farmed together for years. The farm later became a century farm. Vernon lost his first wife and remarried later on. He took great joy in having his family visit his farm and he loved antique cars. He was a member of the Dutch Masters Auto Club of Pella. You will be missed Vernon!

## Sunday Lunch (Part 2)

On Sunday afternoons, while parents visited in the church basement over post-lunch cups of coffee, the children spent their time releasing some pent-up energy. The boys, left to their own devices, came up with a wide variety of daring escapades. I must admit that I only heard about it, but undoubtedly it was true. Cars were parked safely—or so the parents thought—with keys inside. It was an irresistible situation which made it common for Chevys, Fords, and possibly Nashes to make a trip or two around the church yard. It was also discovered that cars with rear wheel drive were capable of all sorts of amazing stunts—done to amaze and impress onlookers.

Since it was the 1940's, I had pretty much learned that "Boy's Rule." (Now I am more enlightened!) Back then, I made sure I stayed out of their space. However, one young lady had not learned the lesson—due to no brothers at home—and one Sunday she found herself perched on the church roof. She had been tucked up there by the boys! Everyone seems to remember that story, as does she. The father of the young girl had some words with the boys, but for the most part such antics were simply attributed to "boys being boys." Imagine that!

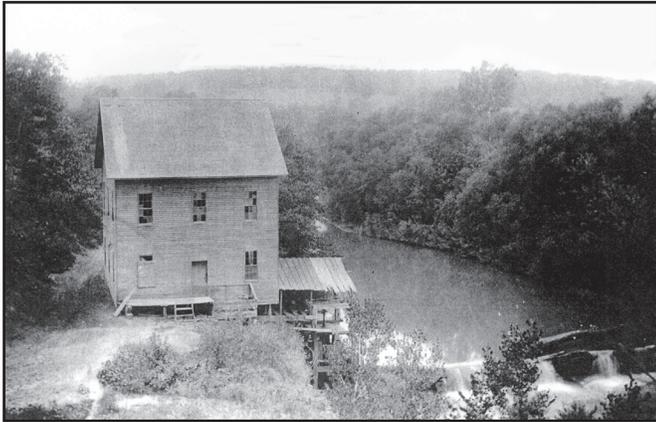
The next time you hear someone sigh and complain

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# The Old Warren Mill

Early settlers in the Peoria area needed to grind much of the grain they grew, so it would be fit for human and animal consumption. Without the power of steam, gas or electricity, they depended on the power of moving water and huge grinding stones found in grist mills.

Since there weren't any mills nearby, all grain had to be hauled for miles to the Whistler's Mill (southeast of Sigourney) or to the Duncan's Mill (upstream from Oskaloosa). Imagine the excitement when, in 1846, Robert Warren worked alongside his father (Rev. Dr. James Warren) to build a mill just two miles south of where Peoria stands today. It was located on the Pella side of the Skunk River and about two blocks downstream from the present Pella-Peoria river bridge. As shown in the picture to the left, the early mill stood right on the river so it could access the power of the water flowing past. It appears that there was a small dam in the river to channel the water as well.



The site was also the spot chosen for the first of several Warren Bridges built over the years. The bridge—the first to span the South Skunk River—made it much easier to travel around the area. Some of the rubble from those early bridges can still be seen when water levels of the current river—that



we all cross numerous times each week—are very low.

In time, a small village (Warrensville) sprang up around the new mill. Sadly, soon after, the mill was destroyed by fire. Undeterred, James rebuilt in 1850—just in time to serve a new town (Peoria) that was established in 1853. The second mill was more than busy for the next thirty-two years until—once again—a fire broke out in the dust pan of the corn sheller on the second floor. The building burned to the ground and this time was not rebuilt. It would have folded soon anyway, because steam power was gradually replacing more and more of the old water-powered mills.

Robert—pictured on the right—moved his family to Des Moines after the fire. He, and a son, both served in the Iowa legislature over the years. The son, James L. Warren, was the grandfather of Charles L. Folkers—a California resident—who sent us this wonderful picture of the mill. No doubt it's a picture very few, if any of us, have ever seen before. -Marilee VW, J. P. Dahm



### *-Fun Run continued*

Kevin, "but when I came around the corner by the old store, I couldn't help but walk—my mind was so full of all the memories. It was so special! Walking by my old home I found myself turning up the gravel road to where the chicken house used to be. It was gone but the memories weren't. I stopped to take it all in." The barking of neighborhood dogs brought him back to reality and returning to the pavement he began to run towards Pella.

What sorts of memories come to mind if a person has been gone from Peoria for ten to fifteen years? As he ran, Kevin found himself thinking about growing up in the 60's & 70's. "We spent a lot of time playing sports—of all kinds—with as many kids as we could get from the neighborhood," Kevin said. "There were always softball games going on in yards around town as well as fast pitch games up on the school diamond. In the winter, we'd play endless basketball games on cleared driveways until our parents called us in for the night." They thought they were pretty cool when Vander Harts cleared out enough hay in their haymow for an inside basketball court. Lighting allowed games to go late into the night.

"The Dahm's Store was a favorite place to go to get a treat," grins Kevin. "I remember the old gas pumps with the glass tops and the ham sandwiches that were served to 'loyal' customers.

My grandfather had laying hens in the chicken house and one of my chores was to help collect the eggs. Of course I'd hurry with that so I could get out to play with my friends." He also reminisced about 4th of July church picnics, Cadet pancake suppers, school Christmas programs, and sledding down their gravel hill in the winter.



It took Kevin 1 1/2 hours to complete his goal, and his family (and extended family) participated in a variety of ways. Some joined the run, others walked it, and still others helped in a support role.

"It was a nice quiet morning in the country reflecting on memories," said Kevin. "The one thing obviously missing was the smell of cattle and pigs along the way—until just before Pella. With the end in sight, the smell of that farm made the trip down memory lane complete and gave me a reason to keep running all the way to the finish line."

Will he do it again? "I don't know if I will or not," says Kevin. "My family members think it would be cool to do something like this again. It definitely met my expectations and was very special for me. It was neat to be able to get my family involved too. They probably don't realize what that meant to me."

-Kevin Nikkel/Marilee VW



There's been a number of community events in the Township since the June issue came out. How many were you able to attend?

On a warm and breezy Memorial Day morning, 135 people gathered to commemorate those who served and died in the armed forces of our country. As we gazed over the picturesque landscape to the west, Ruth De Bruin led us in a meaningful service. State Representative Guy Vander Linden from Oskaloosa spoke in honor of those who had fallen. He also described the history of poppies being associated with Memorial Day. Mr. Vander Linden piloted the Air Force helicopter for President Reagan, and he was a Brigadier General in the Marine Corps. Our singing was accompanied by Jodi De Vries. Her husband Randy and son Colby sang two numbers, which were appreciated by the crowd. Spencer Fynaardt played taps at the end of the service. Then it was time for delicious caramel and cinnamon rolls with coffee or orange juice. The children were given a treat if they found the gravesite of a veteran who had passed since 2000; a double treat if this veteran was a relative. It was a great time for remembering and fellowship.



On June 26, a Sunday evening, rain seemed imminent so the planned community outdoor service at the Peoria Church was moved indoors. Everyone was flexible and it turned out to be an enjoyable and blessed event. Hearts and voices joined to sing and worship informally, and Pastor Gorter shared from God's Word. There was a good amount of fellowship over a light lunch in the church basement afterwards.

The VBS theme this year was *Inside Out and Upside Down on Main Street*. We learned a "word on the street" each day—gratitude, compassion, forgiveness, and grace—by looking at different parables from the Bible. There were 74 kids that attended with approximately 40 helpers/staff/directors. We enjoyed storytime, music, crafts, games, and a snack each day. We concluded the week with a short program on Friday evening.

Over 272 people from the community enjoyed a scrumptious hog roast on Friday, July 15. We enjoyed potato salad, baked beans, fruit, finger jello and pulled pork—all prepared by Julie Roose and family. The weather cooperated, but large raindrops eventually set in motion a quick clean-up and vehicles full of well-fed people heading home. It was a delightful time to connect with neighbors we haven't seen for a while. Thank you to the Peoria Church for hosting this annual event.

## What's Happening

August 28	Joint worship service with Lower Grove Church, Peoria Church 6:00 p.m.
November 4	School Bazaar - Peoria Christian School
November 24	Thanksgiving worship service Peoria Church - 9:30 a.m.
December 18	Youth Candlelight service Peoria Church - 6:00 p.m.
December 25	Christmas worship service Peoria Church - 9:30 a.m.

## Holy War (Part 4)

The battle lines were drawn. Rev. F. Evans had arrived to stem the progress of the Seventh Day Adventists (led by Henry Nicola) in the small town of Granville (northeast of Peoria). He was mandated to give five lectures in the Methodist Church, and the SDA folks would be giving rebuttal lectures in the same building, the next day.

Tension was in the air as the lectures started. Following the first rebuttal lecture by the SDA, Evans immediately gave a one-hour unscheduled reply. "He based every one of his arguments on a direct misrepresentation of our views," stated Nicola. Ignoring him, Evans opened the next day's lecture with what the SDA crowd described as an abusive, personal attack, bringing up incidents that had occurred in New Sharon. He concluded with, "I wish it distinctly understood that I am through with those young men forever." Then, with backing from the Methodist church, he announced that the church doors would no longer be opened for any SDA responses. He gave them the opportunity to make a final statement.

Nicolas, anticipating that things were not going to go well, had made alternate plans. He announced that the SDA rebuttals would simply move to the Granville United Brethren (UB) Church. He gave the exact day and time. Immediately Evans arose and announced the time of his next lecture. It would be the exact time and date as the SDA rebuttal lecture!

This tit-for-tat exchange went on for three successive days. Finally the SDAs decided to hold their rebuttals until Rev. Evans left the area. Upon his departure, the Methodists scheduled a revival meeting, and made efforts (unsuccessfully) to keep the SDA people from using the United Brethren Church. Both the revivals and lectures were well attended, but damage had been done to both sides. The Sunday School Superintendent of the Methodist Church resigned, and Nicola received threats that the SDA meeting tent would be burned down at their next scheduled stop, which was Lynnville.

So, who were the winners and losers of this historical event? On the one hand, there were no permanent winners as none of the competing groups survived to have an organized church presence in Richland Township. On the other hand, the debates sparked an area-wide renewed interest in theology and personal faith that would have otherwise been absent.

-Calvin Bandstra/Marilee VW



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

## Business Services



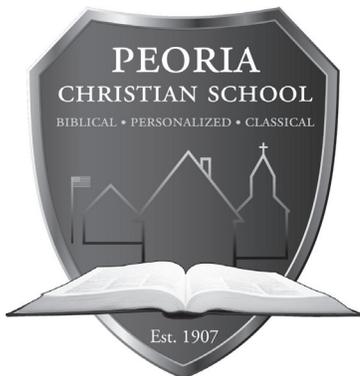
**Van Dyke Repair Inc.,**  
General repair on tractors and combines. Wayne Van Dyke, 641-625-4146.

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

## For Sale

**For Sale:** First crop grass and alfalfa round bales. 625-4122.

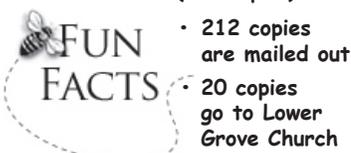
**For Sale:** Hand-crafted gifts, deck furniture, quilt racks, windmills, and many other things. 625-4148, 1219 Hwy 102 (road to Pella).



625.4131 [www.peoriachr.org](http://www.peoriachr.org)

## Peoria Partyline Issues

- Most go to the Peoria church:
- September 2010 (132 copies)
- December 2010 (171 copies)
- March 2011 (129 copies)
- June 2011 (146 copies)



The family of Jacob and Stienje Dahm celebrated the 100th anniversary of the family's arrival in America on July 8, 9 and 10. Some of the festivities were held right here in Peoria.

The family, which included twelve children, had been living in the Netherlands where Jacob, the father, operated a bakery and delivered bakery products by dog cart and later by pony cart. In 1899 a terrible blow occurred—a disastrous fire destroyed the bakery and their attached home. The fire was caused by a young

boy making a candle holder out of a sugar beet and setting it on the window sill, where the lace curtain caught fire. A new home was constructed. The front of the new house was a store where they sold bakery goods. In the back was the bakery itself. The bedrooms were all upstairs.

In time, Jacob wisely decided there was no future for the family in the Netherlands—especially if all the children decided to become bakers. Two sons were sent ahead to “spy out the land” of America, and they returned with a good report. Plans were made to immigrate. Just as they were ready to leave for the ship, they noticed the baby was missing. Fortunately the train waited, and soon the neighbor lady came rushing up with the lost child. With all accounted for, the family set sail on April 8, 1911. The trip cost the father \$2400.

Upon arriving in Iowa, they stayed overnight in Pella with a sister of Stienje and then settled near Leighton. Later they moved to a farm near Eddyville. The children attended the Black Oak Center school where they learned the English language.

In 1915, a farm of 440 acres was purchased near Peoria. Neighbors helped saw down nearby trees for lumber, while sand, cement and additional lumber—shipped in by rail to Taintor—were hauled by horse and buggy to the new building site. (This farm is where the Harold Pothoven family resides today.) The family attended the Peoria Christian Reformed Church.

Of the twelve children, nine settled in the Oskaloosa, New Sharon and Peoria area; one moved to Michigan, one to Florida, and one became a minister. Two owned and operated a general store in Peoria for many years, and two of their descendants are dentists in Pella today.

None of the original family survives today. However, there are several grandchildren and great grandchildren in the area.

The family is grateful for all the blessings they received here in America and no one has ever felt inclined to move back to Holland.

-Dorothy VK and Doris N

*-Sunday Lunch continued*

about the “kids nowadays” you might want to remember that maybe the good ole days weren't as pristine as we remember them. In defense of the church basement boys and girls however, perhaps there was some justification for their exuberant behavior. Sunday rules prohibited lots of fun and games. In other words, NO ball games—not even pitch and catch—no bat, gloves or balls, or games of any kind were to be tucked in the trunk of the car along with the picnic basket. Families differed in what they considered was acceptable, but overall, the belief that Sunday was a day of rest—a different day—was a cherished belief. And supervision was minimal. The dads, good men though they were, were enjoying their pipes and cigars down in the church basement, and the ladies were busy cleaning up the tables, repacking their baskets and getting in a bit of visiting. Kids—full of energy and creativity—were bound to find ways to have some fun. Then, before one could imagine, the church's five-minute bell tolled, and once again everyone headed upstairs for the afternoon service.

I have to admire the conviction of the church basement diners. They were firm believers in regular church attendance and went the extra mile to see to it that it happened. A day to go away was a treasure. One family, as the story goes, parked their car on a gravel road as near to their home as possible. On Sunday, donned in their Sunday best, they jumped onto a farm wagon pulled by a tractor and drove to their car, piled in, and headed for church. Undoubtedly their church lunch basket was with them! Then the wheels on the car went round and round...off for another whole day at church.

-Wilma Blom

## PEORIA BAZAAR AT THE PEORIA GYM

Friday, November 4  
3:00 Bake Sale  
5:00-6:30 Supper  
7:00 Auction