



A Newsletter from Pella Preservation Trust

PRESERVE PELLA

PELLA PRESERVATION TRUST CELEBRATES ITS FIRST 30 YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENTS



Trust President Ann Summitt gifting the keys to the Prins House to new owners Andi and Jonathan Dykstra.

In 2024, the Trust completed its 30th year as an organization. It is sometimes helpful to reflect back on where you've come from and where you're going. In this article, we'd like to share some of our achievements with you.

In June 1994, our non-profit organization was incorporated under the name Historic Pella Trust. The original Lincoln School building was threatened with imminent demolition and it quickly became clear that there were no local organizations to advocate for preservation of important buildings. The Pella Historical Society perhaps seemed the most likely, but they are tightly focused on their museum campuses and Tulip Time activities, and had neither the personnel, time or finances to tackle this kind of large undertaking.

When this became obvious, an ad hoc meeting was held by Eunice Kuyper Folkerts, Ralph Jaarsma, Karen Baxter, LeAnn Bouwkamp, Tim Heerema, Robert J. Klein, Bobby Klein, and Duane Rempé. It was from this nucleus that the Trust was born. They adopted the Mission Statement: "To Promote and Protect Buildings, Sites and Landscapes Important to the Heritage of Pella, Iowa." The fledgling organization worked zealously to try and save and repurpose the old Lincoln school building, but to no avail. It was demolished in 1995.

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MUSIC IN THE WALLS ONCE AGAIN

Andi Dykstra

"Luck? I don't know anything about luck. I've never banked on it and I'm afraid of people who do. Luck to me is something else: Hard work - and realizing what is opportunity and what isn't."
- Lucille Ball

The "opportunity" to own, restore, care for, and put blood sweat and tears into a piece of history cannot be entered into lightly. It takes unique people to see the

opportunity, potential, and scope of such a large undertaking like restoring an historical home.

Everyone agrees that history must be preserved so that wisdom and knowledge isn't forgotten. Our family has been blessed with the opportunity to preserve one piece of Pella's history: the Van Houweling/Kuyper/Prins house located just north of

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Renovation work by the Dykstras is underway at the Prins House.

PPT CELEBRATES ITS FIRST 30 YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENTS

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Another opportunity soon presented itself when Pella's oldest remaining church building, the former Soul Sleepers Church at 824 Franklin Street, was threatened with demolition. Realizing the importance of the building, the Trust reached out to the owner with an offer to purchase the property. The late Joan Farver, Chair of Pella Corp. and daughter of Rolscreen founder Pete Kuyper, offered to personally contribute half of the \$100,000 price tag if matching funds from the community for the other half could be obtained. As a result, the church property was acquired - and is still owned - by the Trust.



The first building saved by the Trust. The former Soulsleepers Church was purchased in 1995 and is still owned by the Trust.

Purchasing the iconic Tuttle pioneer cabin in 2015 from Gail Kirby was a big moment for the Trust. It is considered the birthplace of Pella and, for safe keeping, remains in the possession of the Trust.

Purchasing and holding a property is the only sure way to protect buildings. However, it is also the most expensive, and unless it is an

income producing property, it is very difficult to maintain the necessary resources to preserve it indefinitely.

The Trust next explored utilizing Conservation Easements, sometimes called Preservation Easements. These are powerful binding legal agreements, represented as a rider on a property's deed, which is placed by the current owner and prevents altering or removing specified historic features by future owners of the property.

The Trust purchased a threatened 1880s-era house at 710 West First Street. We renovated the property, including a new roof, paint, replaced the electrical service, plumbing and HVAC, and landscaped the lawn. We then sold the property with a conservation easement that limited which external features can be removed or altered.

A similar process was used on the historic Ten Hagen Cottage/ Stegeman Store located at 1110 Washington Street. It was less than a week away from the wrecking ball, when the Trust stepped in and purchased it; again, with anonymous assistance from Joan Farver. The Trust spent a lot of time renovating the property before selling it with a protective Conservation Easement. It now operates as Strawtown Cottage, a beautiful Airbnb owned by Mary Van Wyk.

The Trust is totally dependent on donations, grants and memberships to fund our preservation efforts; and we appreciate each and every one of our contributors! In fact, it was generous donations that resulted in the successful preservation of two historic buildings.

The property at 1401 University Street, known as the Van Loon Rock House was gifted to the Trust by Edith Kuitert in 1997. Edith had purchased and lived in the house for several years, and wished to see the unique house saved for the appreciation of future generations. The Trust performed some interior updating and then proceeded to rent the property for over twenty years, before selling it with a conservation easement in 2019.

Similarly, in 2023, Central College donated the historic property at 906 Independence Street to the Trust. For decades, the house belonged to members of the Albert and Netta Van Houweling family. It was then sold to Hop and Joyce Kuyper, who sold it in 1977 to the college, which used it as supplemental housing. A major water leak significantly damaged the rear dormitory addition to the house, but left the original portion of the home intact.

The college no longer had need for the property. Since it is located in a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places, Central offered to donate the property to the Trust. The Trust then regifted the property, protected with a conservation easement, to new owners Jonathan and Andi Dykstra, who are in the process of returning it to a single-family residence. The Dykstras will then make it their home. See the separate article in this newsletter for more details.

The Trust has worked with owners who wished to voluntarily place Conservation Easements on their properties. Such has been the case with the historic blacksmith shop at 914 Franklin Street. Likewise, the brick home at 817 Oskaloosa Street, the oldest remaining building in South Pella, had an easement placed at the owner's request. Similarly, the 1874 architecturally-unique brick home of Eilko and Josephine Van Houten, at 306 East First Street, has been protected with an easement.

The former City Hall building at 707 Main Street, with its iconic cement dog statues out front, had a conservation easement placed on it at the request of the City of Pella prior to being sold in 2009.

The Trust even has a program to provide grants in exchange for the placement of conservation easements. If you have questions concerning conservation easements, feel free to reach out to one of the Trust board members.

Another process the Trust has utilized to help preserve historic properties is through their placement on the National Register of Historic Places. Being on the Register itself does not provide protection, but it does open the property owner up to applying for Historic Tax Credits for property maintenance or renovation.



The first house the Trust purchased, renovated and preserved with a Conservation Easement. Built in the 1880s, it is located at 710 West 1st Street.

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PPT CELEBRATES ITS FIRST 30 YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENTS
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Currently, an Iowa tax credit is available for 25 percent of qualified rehabilitation expenditures incurred for the substantial rehabilitation of eligible property. In case the credit is higher than your taxes, these credits are fully refundable or transferable. On top



In 2015, the Trust purchased, preserved, and continues to hold, the iconic Tuttle Cabin.

of that, a federal historic tax credit is available for commercial properties. It is through the recognition of being on the National Register and the offsetting of maintenance expense that being accepted to the Register makes sense.

So far, the Trust has placed six properties on the National Register. Board member Wayne Stienstra

has also personally placed four of his properties on the Register, and has experience in utilizing the tax credit. Wayne is a wonderful resource for everything from historic renovation to those tax credits.

In 2012, the Trust began urging the City of Pella to form an Historic Preservation Commission. This commission came to fruition in 2015. This commission then drafted a city zoning overlay ordinance for Historic Districts, which was approved and adopted by the city council. This ordinance helps designated Historic Districts preserve and retain their architectural integrity. The commission currently consists of five members appointed by the mayor and approved by the city council.

The process to be accepted as a Pella Historic District is a rigorous one. It requires consent of a majority of the property owners in the proposed district; approval by the State Historic Preservation Office that the district qualifies as historic; multiple public hearings; and finally, votes of approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission and then the City Council.

The benefit of the Historic Preservation Commission is that it allows Pella to provide protection for more than one property at a time. The Trust was well represented on the Commission, with three of its first five members being current or former Trust board members.

In 2021, the Collegiate Neighborhood Historic District became the first approved District in Pella. It provides protection to 34 properties. In 2023, the Scholte Garden Historic District became the second approved District, helping to protect 45 additional properties. Currently, the McClatchey Mill Historic District is in the process of becoming a District. An additional 47 properties will be protected when this District is approved.

Through the years, the Trust has been involved in many other projects that provide recognition and/or protection to some of

Pella's most historic buildings and sites. The Trust has provided awareness to over 150 local properties through the awarding of Historic Landmark plaques and/or Architectural Significance Awards. In 2009, we produced, and continue to sell, a 12-page booklet entitled *Architectural Tour of Early Historic Pella*. It is now in its third edition and to date we have printed over 10,000 copies.

One of our most ambitious projects has been the Tuttle Learning Walk, a beautiful brick path that connects the Tuttle Cabin with Pella's Sunken Garden Park. Along the way, it features seven signs that detail some of Pella's history. In a partnership with the city, the Trust raised the \$200,000 funding for the walkway, and the city provided an abandoned alleyway for the walk, then oversaw its construction and provides maintenance for the walk. It remains a popular tourist attraction.

The Trust has also assisted in the moving of homes. In 2018, we partnered with Central College to find a new owner for the Boardwalk House. Boardwalk was the college's name for the enormous 1914 home built by lumberyard-owner Adolphus Waechter. The Trust utilized our Facebook page to promote the availability of the home. That post eventually reached over 750,000 readers and brought three Des Moines television reporters to town to cover the successful story.

In 2022, Trust board member Shawn Thomas rescued a home at 404 Main Street that was scheduled for demolition. He moved it to 1015 East 3rd Street, a fitting location adjacent to Rotary Park.

Education of Pella's historic past has been provided by the Trust to many grade-school students who have spent a day at the Tuttle Cabin

learning about pioneer life and the early days of Pella. This summer, the Trust partnered with the Pella Historical Museums and the Historic Preservation Commission to provide free, guided city wagon tours wending through three miles of Pella's historic areas. Over 500 people took advantage of the tours to learn more about our city's past and some of its most historic buildings and districts.

There's a lot more to the Trust, but space is limited. We have tried to highlight some of the accomplishments made possible through generous supporters such as yourself. We could not succeed without the donations of our members and donors. If you are able to contribute additional funds to help preserve Pella's past, we would be truly grateful. It takes a lot of time and resources to promote and preserve our community's heritage, but we wouldn't be involved if we weren't passionate about it, and convinced that preservation makes Pella a better place to visit and live. Thank you for your past and future support. We're looking forward to the next thirty years! ■



Saved from the bulldozer with funding assistance from philanthropist Joan Kuyper, this prototypical early Pella home was stabilized by the Trust and sold with a conservation easement.

MUSIC IN THE WALLS ONCE AGAIN

(continued from page 1)

Central's campus at 906 Independence Street. We are so grateful to have been entrusted with the mission to help preserve the historic nature of our quaint town.

Taking on this project has already required much effort. Our family has endeavored to learn the property, the history, and the value of this home to the city of Pella. We have a love of preservation and the hard work that comes with this labor of love.

My husband, Jonathan, and I met while we were both students at Central College ('02 and '04 alumni). Interestingly, both of us have lived in many dorms and houses within view of the Prins house.

As I researched this home, I found many similarities between our family and the families of the past that have graced the halls of this stately home. The Van Houwelings had one daughter just like us, and the Kuypers were a musical family

that painted the walls with new sound and beautiful compositions. I smiled when I read this because the three of us in our little family are all musicians.

All three of us love to sing and all three of us are instrumentalists. Jonathan and I both play the bassoon and laid eyes on each other for the first-time playing in Central's Symphonic Wind Ensemble!

Because of this, as we work through preserving this home, the front room will be dedicated to music once again as we plan on bringing a grand piano into the space and designing it to accommodate small instrumental ensembles. This will be reminiscent of the front window of the downtown Kuyper Music House business so many years ago with its stately grand pianos on display.

With the help of our carpenter and brother, Joe Braafhart, who is a well-respected builder and quality restoration expert, we plan to restore the original "American 4-Square" portion to its glory while keeping the 1980s dorm addition and melding it into the early 1910's original.

We hope to include a fireplace, butler's pantry, and a few secret hidden doors in the home. All the while preserving the woodwork, original staircase, and the amazingly-engineered dorm staircase.

Unfortunately, there are a few scars where original woodwork has been removed when the dorm went on in the 1980's. All of the 5-panel wood doors are gone as well as the colonnades. But as Providence would have it, we found out the original house had a finished attic complete with built-in cupboards! When we discovered this treasured room there was one solitary 5-panel door laying forlornly on its side behind a pile of blown-in insulation! So now we have an original to match!

In the front room, there are scars in the wood floor where colonnades used to stand. Thankfully, we were able to procure salvaged colonnades to restore the front room to its original glory. We hope to renovate and preserve this dear home in the next year, move in, and make this our forever home. We would love to be able to pass it on to our daughter and her family someday.

The essence of our little city is made up of caring families who desire to maintain the historical atmosphere in our community. The goodness of hard work, the beauty of preservation, and the truth it displays in bringing history back from the shadows is still valued today. We thank you Central College and the Pella Preservation Trust for entrusting this beautiful home to our family. ■



What a difference! The Trust's early cleanup efforts following damage from a burst water line.



Remodeling efforts by the Dykstras in the former dormitory addition to the home.

REPURPOSING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Shawn Thomas, Pella Preservation Trust Vice-President

The idea of conservation can mean many things to many people, to some it is to preserve a building or home to its original configuration and for its original intent. For others, it's a chance to save a structure, re-purpose it and give it a new life. The later of the two is our story today.

When I first moved to Pella from California, the intent was to have our home near downtown that would be where we lived, but that left a need for a place to keep some of my cherished Historic Racing related items. I had my eye on a building at the West end of my block that seemed like it would be a great fit. I knew nothing of its history, and it had a fire that destroyed the roof and much more, but when I learned of the story of the property, I had to find a way to save it and give it a whole new purpose.

Once I was able to purchase the property, much work went into getting the structure into a stable condition. The prior owner gave me a great head start with a replaced roof, but had he not been a preservation minded person himself, the story would have ended with the fire it suffered from.

I learned much about the building as I went down the path of rebuilding it, and there's still more to do, but now I get to use the property for what I had dreamed of. Keep in mind, it started as a blacksmith shop, with residential rooms added in its early years. It then became housing only, and even served a period as a food co-op, before returning to a duplex. It was in that form when the fire happened. The new chapter to its long-storied life is to serve as a place to teach history of early motorsport, preservation, and restoration.

With hundreds of people yearly coming to visit, it has become a featured stop of historians, Hall of Fame members of various racing affiliations, and casual race fans wanting to see what a workshop in the middle of the century would have looked like. Filled with period tools, parts, a couple cars, and driver's and crew memorabilia, it creates a perfect atmosphere to discuss how cars were finished in the day, and to become a blueprint for others restoring historic cars of their own.

It also is a great gathering point to look at artifacts that few ever get a chance to see, to learn about what life was like at that time for so many drivers and crew and car owners. The best part is, this is all fitting within the walls of a building that has its very own unique history. Much time is spent by visitors discussing the building, and its place in the history of the town.

With a little vision, a perfectly good building, needing some care, can have a great new purpose. Maybe the idea of such a new intended use wouldn't make sense in a brand-new building. Maybe the idea of raising families in such an old building doesn't make sense any longer either. But everything can have another purpose if you put your mind to it. Through the ultimate recycling effort, if you will, we have saved a great old building from a landfill.



Preservationist Shawn Thomas, center rear, detailing some of the historic blacksmith shop's history with engaged guests. Photo Credit: Lee Greenawalt Photography



Shawn Thomas enjoys sharing the stories behind some of his historic race cars and memorabilia in the former blacksmith shop.

Better yet, we have given the opportunity for this property to have further new chapters by saving it now. The future of 914 Franklin Street is safe for a long time to come, with a Preservation Easement placed on the property through the Pella Preservation Trust, it ensures that the property will be kept the historic jewel that it has been for over 170 years.

In the coming years, more work will continue to be performed, and it's a sound investment to continue the efforts as the preservation efforts in the town continue to make it a very desirable place for people to live and visit. People are encouraged to stop by if you see the doors open. I always enjoy hearing stories that others have of this building. After all of these years, it has so many to tell! ■

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Pearls are the only gemstone that are made by a living creature. With a small grain of sand (the grit), the oyster creates a beautiful object. Just like the oyster, the beauty of our city's many pearls has shown through due to the grit of many, many people who have and are continuing to support the Pella Preservation Trust. The pearls have been lovingly treated by those that own them. These people have shown that we can take something of wonderful historic value that often times has been neglected, and with an enormous amount of grit can turn it into the luster of a beautiful pearl.

Fresh water pearls come in many different shapes, sizes, and colors. This is also true of the many wonderful historic attractions we have in Pella. The Tuttle Cabin is an example of a rough and rugged pearl of great importance to our community, as it was the birthplace of Pella. Big Rock Park is another rugged and beautiful fresh water pearl, and is yet another historical part of Pella and its history. The grit of Pete and Lucille Kuyper and the donation of this beautiful park to the City of Pella keeps its luster alive.

Another kind of pearl is a cultured pearl. Just as the name implies, it is cultured by a piece of grit being placed inside of an oyster and the oyster then goes to work to bring about a wonderful transformation from the grit. Cultured pearls are round and smooth, their luster is captivating, and they come in many different sizes and colors.

When thinking of cultured pearls, one of the first grand homes in Pella comes to mind. The Scholte House across the street from the north side of Central Park is a cultured pearl. This home was built by the founder of Pella, Dominie Scholte, for his aristocratic bride, Maria. It is a house of elegance and splendor. Another cultured pearl in Pella is the wonderfully restored Opera House with its beautiful and intriguing stained-glass windows, its lustrous interior, and the beauty of gold and shining, shimmering woodwork.

These are by NO means all that Pella has to offer. Our central business district in and of itself is a necklace of cultured pearls. The buildings that comprise this district are in a multitude of colors, shapes, and architecture. The owners have polished and protected these gems through decades upon decades.

Pella Preservation Trust has been celebrating our 30th year of existence. Pearls signify 30 years.

Everyone can observe the grit that caretakers have given to their historic endeavors.

An abundance of historic homes, businesses, and landmarks are evident throughout our community.

Reflecting on what has been done and observing the beauty is what keeps Pella shining.

Loving all things historic is what draws visitors from near and far.

Saving and capturing the historic has been Pella Preservation Trust's commitment for the last thirty years.

This past year has been a whirlwind of activity and adventure. At the time of our last newsletter, we were getting the Tuttle Cabin ready for the 2023 Christmas Tour of Homes. The cabin was decorated as close to period authentic as possible, and turned it into a cozy enchanting piece of history. This was followed by the recent acquisition of the Prins House, which has been covered elsewhere in the newsletter.

If anyone is interested or you know of anyone who might like to become a member of the Pella Preservation Trust, please see the attached membership form. It is also time for renewal so we thank each and every one of you in advance.

It has been a privilege to be a part of the Pella Preservation Trust and the legacy it is committed to.

Thank you,
Ann Summitt

OUR BOARD MEMBERS

The Trust currently has 14 board members. One of these, Duane Rempe, has the distinction of having served continuously on the board since the founding of the organization. Over the years, 49 individuals have graced the board. The following list shows our current members and when they joined the board.

Duane Rempe	1995
Dody Boat	1996
Wayne Stienstra	1999
Ron Rietveld.....	2005
Bob Zylstra	2010
Matt McCulla.....	2014
Bruce Boertje.....	2014
Mary Van Wyk.....	2014
Lila Turnbull.....	2018
Ann Summit.....	2021
Shawn Thomas.....	2022
Candace Thersby.....	2023
Annie Vande Kamp.....	2024
Jordan Vande Kamp.....	2024

HONORED AT ANNUAL MEETING



Honored for their service to the Trust at our Annual Meeting: Eunice and Davis Folkerts; Ruth and Ron Rietveld; Elaine and Ralph Jaarsma. Eunice, Davis and Ralph are past-presidents; Eunice and Ralph are also founding members.

PROTECT & PROMOTE PELLA'S HERITAGE WITH YOUR 2025 MEMBERSHIP

Pella Preservation Trust (formerly Historic Pella Trust), established in 1994, is a non-profit preservation group that helps to preserve Pella's architectural resources so that future generations may continue to be enriched by the historic legacy of Pella's Dutch heritage and culture. **Mission Statement: To Protect and Promote Buildings, Landscapes, and Sites Important to the Heritage of Pella, Iowa.** We appreciate your 2025 memberships and partnership contributions for protecting the architectural resources of Pella, Iowa.

KEEP IN TOUCH

EMAIL: To receive timely Trust updates via email, please provide your email address on the attached form, or send it to: office@historicpellatrust.org.

Please visit PPT on the web and Facebook for local history, information and photos.

historicpellatrust.org



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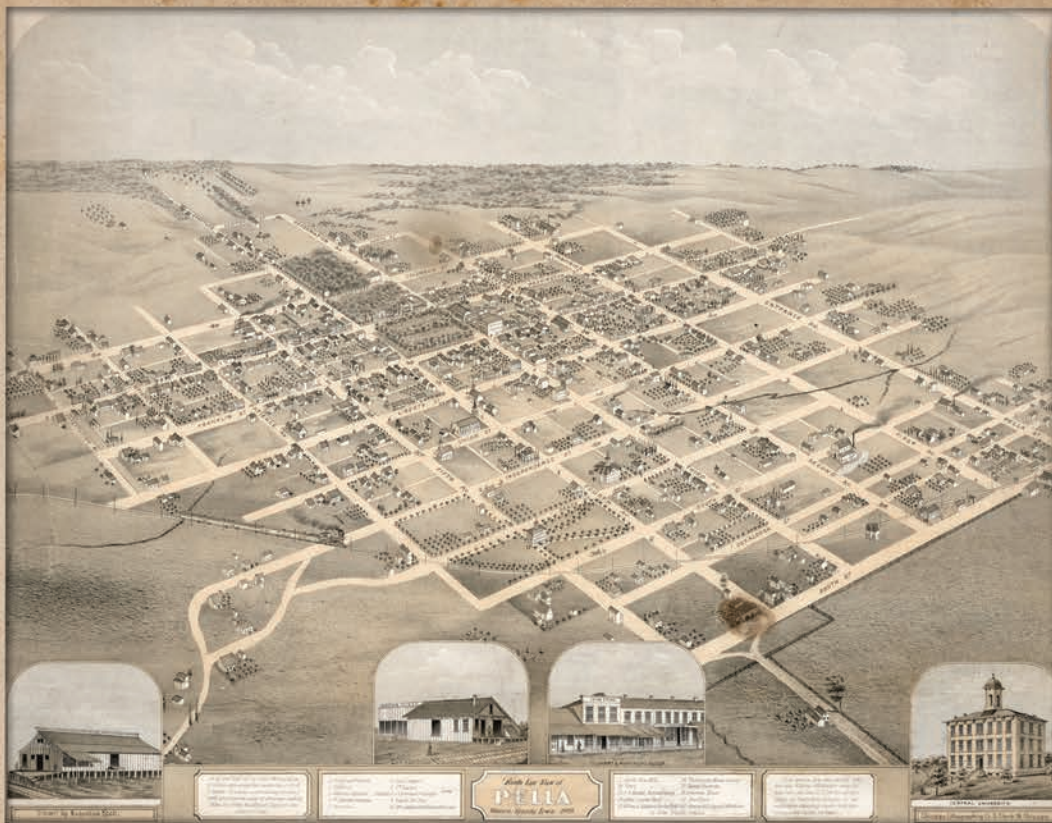
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1869 PELLA MAP

Pella was just 22 years old in 1869, when mapmaker August Koch produced this invaluable map of Pella. This is the oldest known drawing of the city of Pella and its buildings, and was produced with amazing accuracy and detail. This map depicts Pella as it appeared at the time Scholte died. Interestingly, there are some three or four dozen buildings still standing that are depicted on the map.

The Trust has had high-quality images of the map printed that we are offering for sale. These maps come in two different sizes: approximately 27" x 36" and 18" x 24". Cost is \$40 for the larger size, and \$25 for the smaller one. Maps may be ordered by emailing the Trust at: office@historicpellatrust.org or messaging us on Facebook.