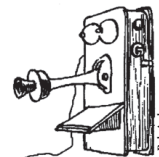


# Peoria Partyline



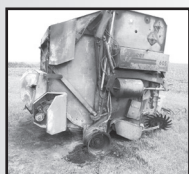
... connecting the extended Peoria community

Volume 11, No. 3

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## Our Local B&B

Jump not to conclusions! In other words, do not plan to call the local bed and breakfast the next time you find yourself entertaining unexpected guests. In our township the local B & B stands for Brackins and Bulldozers. This business began when Paul Brackin and wife Susan moved from What Cheer to this area many years ago. Paul began working with bulldozers for JB Dahm and the Geetings family. This experience became the launching pad for a new business which today is called Brackin Land Improvement Inc.

Each of Paul and Susan's children—Tim, Trina, Trent, and Trevor—have in one way or another coerced the giant machines into creating a livelihood and way of life for themselves and their families. If you were asked to find a hard hat on a scavenger hunt, a visit to one of the Brackins' households would be a wise choice.

It was my pleasure to visit with the Brackin sibling who wears the hot-pink hard hat—Trina. When she dons that hat, it seems quite appropriate to her, but we see it as an unusual role for a female. In high school she did her part to help with the family business and it was a good fit. She's comfortable on the seat of a monster machine coaxing that huge piece of iron to do what she wants it to do.

Trina says that most of their work is right here in central Iowa doing both farm and commercial projects. Recently they readied the area for the Yellow Iron Academy—a

daycare facility for Vermeer Corporation—and have provided leveling needed for Central College's baseball field and seating for local soccer fields. Other jobs have included levee and dike repairs, building terraces, and leveling an area for a parking lot. When buildings and structures are no longer needed for the purpose they once served, the yellow monsters are called in to do demolition. There are also unusual assignments occasionally. Once Trina had to dig a grave for a friend's dear horse. That was not easy.

Brackin's equipment includes bulldozers as well as scrapers, excavators, and such. When changing a landscape, the grade or elevation for the project at hand is very important. Trina says she does a good deal of the bidding and billing work. This

involves working with people—her customers. She loves that part of her job.

And then there is the work day itself. Typically—when they are in full swing—a day

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## Birds of a Feather

We've all heard the saying, "Birds of a feather flock together," but it's also true that "Birds of a feather bring neighbors together!"

In the early days of the Peoria Partyline, Nicki Veenstra—one of our original writers—was encouraged to stop by Jerry and Nancy Van Wyk's farm. As a local business—and near neighbors—did they want to be included in a story or maybe just advertise? She'll take the story from here.

At that meeting I drew the short straw—so to speak—on Jerry Van Wyk and his birds. I say short straw because while I knew his children I did not know him. A quick fact about me you may not know—I struggle meeting new people. I have a comfortable little circle and am quite content to stay in it. Anyway, I spent a few days asking Jayme (my husband)

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## Road Work

In late March Peoria turned into a gigantic construction zone. Huge equipment arrived and on April 6th a road crew began tearing up/replacing the pavement from just south of the Peoria Church all the way north to just before the Arvin Roose farm. In the midst of all the noise, dust, and "Road Closed" signs, our township folks carried on with their lives as best they could. Even school and church services carried on as usual. In the end it proved well worth putting up with the bedlam! The new pavement is wonderful! Now why didn't they just continue all the way up to Temptation Hill?



## Memorial Day

Due to wet and chilly weather folks gathered at the Peoria gym to sing, recite the pledge, and listen to speaker John C. Roose encourage everyone to remember and recall why we celebrate the holiday. Ruth De Bruin was the emcee, Maria Bouwkamp sang a special number, and Ben



Bouwkamp played Taps. Then it was time for guests and locals to visit together—renewing friendships and sharing stories—over sweet rolls, juice, and coffee.



## Hog Roast

Concluding VBS week at the Peoria Church, the community gathered for a program and then delicious food and fellowship outside on the church grounds. It was a wonderful evening and a large crowd!



## Baler Burns, Billows Smoke

Recently, while Ben Lefevre was trying to get some hay baled shortly before a rain storm, a major interruption to the process occurred. As he was progressing through the field, he heard an unusual noise. He wrapped the bale, unloaded it, and then got off the tractor to investigate. As he pulled out some loose chaff, suddenly there was a burst of flames.

The fire spread quickly to the belts and he decided to head towards a water source to attempt to put out the flames. As he raced across the field the flames and white smoke, followed by plumes of black smoke, were impressive.

The fire intensified, so Ben realized that to protect and save



his tractor from burning as well, he needed to unhook the baler and abandon it in the field. Fortunately he was uninjured as he did so, but his tractor still sustained some damage from the intense heat.

Some minor fires in the bean field—and an adjacent fence line where corn husks had accumulated—also started, but these were put out without further incident.

As the photo shows, Ben and Keith now have good reason to go shopping for a new baler.

Don't ever say that farming is predictable!

-Doris Nibbelink

## Cherry Grove School

Cherry Grove School was located just west of Warren Van Wyngarden's house before it was torn down and the wood used to build a machine shed. That shed still stands on Warren's farm today. One of the school's teachers—Gladys Van Rheenen—was hired to teach for \$65 a month at the tender age of 19. This amount was a little higher than normal because she would also be teaching students from Hickory Grove School.

Like most country schools, the average number of students was 15 and that included all eight grades. In addition to teaching, someone like Gladys was also responsible for janitorial duties such as building the fire each morning, sweeping the floors, scooping snow on cold wintry days, and ensuring that water was brought in every day. The children would bring their packed lunches from home but had their own version of a "hot lunch." That would be putting their food on the old wood stove to warm it up. The 'outhouse' was located just northwest of



the school in the cherry tree grove, and recess meant going outdoors to play—weather permitting.

On July 14, 2013, I was privileged to have a visit from 90-year-old Gladys (Van Rheenen) Cordes who was the school teacher when Kenny Hoksbergen and I began our school years at Cherry Grove. At that time she lived in Lower Grove with

her parents and taught at our school for three years before marrying Central College student, Ralph Cordes. At their wedding Geneva Rus and Joyce Hoksbergen were the flower girls and I was the ring bearer. Ralph went into the ministry and served in Sioux Falls, SD, George, IA, and finally in Pekin, IL.

Up until the time of her passing in December 2013, Gladys lived in Pekin. She was "as sharp as a tack,"

very energetic, still drove, and played the organ for the 2nd Reformed Church. She also volunteered three days a week at the Pekin Hospital. During her visit, she was excited to see the old neighborhood and reminisced about her former students, their parents and her old neighbors.

-Rosemary Schmidt

### - Local B & B Continued

starts around 7:00 am and continues until 6:00 pm, and they work Monday through Saturday. Wow!

When I asked Trina what she would choose to do if she were not doing what she does now, she felt that she would enjoy being part of a landscape business. That makes sense. It would still be about working outside with dirt, rocks, and plants. In other words, quite a distance from a large corporate office.

When Trina takes off her hard hat she finds other activities that she enjoys. She is a 4-H leader, and on Wednesday nights helps with children activities at her church. She even hosts a backyard Pumpkin Party at her home in October. Friends and family can gather to carve a pumpkin, play some games, and enjoy some food and party treats.

Trina lives west of Peoria with her husband Larry Collier. Her husband works with pipeline construction and is a pipe fitter. His job often takes him to faraway places in the United States, but he heads back home whenever he can. Because of her job there are a lot of men in Trina's life—that is—at work. She says that suits her fine. As does the fact that her co-workers are pretty open about their feelings and seem to get any negatives out in the open. No brooding, cattiness, or behind-the-back behavior to deal with. She also has many girlfriends who impact her life in positive ways.

-Wilma Blom

## Bakken Pipeline Back-and-Forth

April 28: Today a joint House-Senate subcommittee at the Iowa legislature moved forward legislation that would prevent Big Oil from using eminent domain laws to confiscate Iowa farmland for this bad project unless the company pays a \$500,000 deposit in every county, reaches voluntary easement agreements for 75% of the total land, and agrees to pay attorney's costs for landowners fighting the pipeline. The bill still has to pass out of a House and Senate committee, and then it must also be voted on by both chambers, and ultimately signed into law by the governor.

News that Dakota Access has offered unsavory, immoral "rewards" for access to land is really, really bad public relations for the company. Add this to all the other stories circulating about pipeline representatives lying and bullying, and more and more Iowans are realizing that Dakota Access is a company that can't be trusted.

Lawyers are warning farmers to carefully check with their attorney re the benefits vs. hazards of signing an easement agreement vs. the eminent domain process. It may be that eminent domain isn't the "big bad wolf" after all if it comes down to being forced to choose.

Some farmers—who have been visited by representatives of the Dakota Access company—say it is already inevitable that the pipeline will go through Iowa. Really? Truth be—no one really knows conclusively what is going to happen. Both sides have good points to be realistically considered. There is a LOT that has to be worked through yet.



## NuMark Expands in Peoria

NuMark—Peoria's only business—grabbed the opportunity to expand when several storm-damaged structures were removed just east of them. After a few improvements, they now have a perfect spot for parking equipment. Could the lot also be a potential site for a new lumber-storage building in the future? We'll have to wait and see. Stay tuned!

-Terry Bandstra



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

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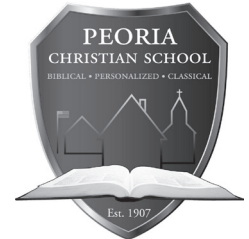
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## BFMTC Open House

Several folks who live in our Township wouldn't have to ask, "What do those letters stand for?" Reason being—they work there on a regular basis! For the rest of you, they stand for Bible for Missions Thrift Center. And I dare say most of you have stopped in there at one time or another to check out their good deals. The store is located west of Pella just down the street from Arby's, and recently a huge addition was added/completed.

Curious about how things look now? Stop by during their Open House on September 26 to get a tour and join in the celebrations! Watch for more information in the Pella papers and get the date on your calendar. See you all there!

-Marilee Vander Wal

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 Cell: 641-780-8106  
[dveenstra@iisnewton.com](mailto:dveenstra@iisnewton.com)

## For Sale

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

## - Birds of a Feather Continued

about Jerry but he was no help. He just kept saying, "Just call him and get it over with already!" Jayme had an unfair advantage you see, he grew up knowing Jerry and also hunted with him. Finally I made the call. I say who I am, why I am calling and I ask if he would like something in the Partyline. His quick response was, "Nope, I've got enough business as it is and advertising isn't necessary." Done. Whew!

Okay, while that was scary, I survived it. What I didn't know, however, was that my call was nowhere near the end of the story when it came to Jerry, his birds, this gal and her family. Within the next few years our two oldest boys started helping Jerry with his Bob White Quail and Ringneck Pheasants. Before long I was helping too.

And what a production it was. Several hundred babies arriving in the spring, lovingly nurtured over the summer, and then shipped out to be sold for bird dog training and hunting purposes in September and October. Over the years it grew to approximately 1,200 quail and 2,000 pheasants hatching annually on site! Just imagine over 300 babies tumbling out of the incubator door when you open it in the morning. That is truly one of God's blessings in action.

Interestingly, the chicks had to be raised on a cement floor—due to susceptibility to organisms in the dirt—and all were caught and fitted with a pair of blinders at the age of six weeks—to keep them from fighting and picking on each other. Netting kept the birds in and predators out, and—as the birds matured—Jerry planted rows of corn in their pens to provide

them with some natural habitat as well.

Over the last five years I realized all this was truly a labor of love for Jerry. He even blessed the children of Peoria's School with hatching babies in the kindergarten classroom as well as offering field trips to see the birds and farm. Jerry was troubled to hear about pheasant and quail populations dwindling in the natural habitats of our countryside. It was with joy that he noticed them repopulating naturally before we lost him to death from illness last year.

As it goes there is a season for everything. For a time there were still pheasant and quail at the Eaton Ave farm. Family and friends were helping in the tasks of caring for them. Jerry took with him many secrets of raising these beautiful birds and no one is sure that they want to step into those big shoes of his to try their own hand at it. But for always we'll have the memories. And they will be the part of Jerry that is still here with us.

-Nicki Veenstra

## Welcome to the Neighborhood!



There are eight new families in Richland Township—and we say, "Welcome" to all of you! We're

excited about getting your family story and sharing it with all of your neighbors who read the Peoria Partyline!