

# THE SUN SPOT

MAHASKA COUNTY NEWS

OFF THE VINE

By Jackie Perkins  
Monday, March 9, 2026...  
What a crazy start to the new week! Surely the fact that I am up and writing at this hour is due to the time change. Many times, this is about the time I am finally getting to sleep! Yesterday (Sunday) was a really quick day. The weekend included watching a lot of basketball and now it is time to get some projects going.

I received a couple calls regarding last week's writing. Oh my goodness - I mistakenly called Omar Sieren, Owen! Thank you JoAnn, and we had such a wonderful visit. Such a happy and upbeat gal she is! I am grateful to having met more of my more distant relatives in the past few years, and hopefully there is going to be more of that coming up.

The first week of each month my calendar is normally full, and enjoyable. Sixty Plus was very well attended on Tuesday. The food table was covered with tasty dishes...and the deserts! Greg just couldn't stop talking about the cinnamon rolls, and wondered who had brought them. That mystery was solved when later in the week I talked to Lila Prell. There was also a beautiful pineapple upside down cake that was a hit for me! I am so happy to see this group continue with folks coming from not only Fremont, but Hedrick, Delta, Oskaloosa, Ottumwa, Cedar, Eddyville and other communities. I happened on an article, yes I save a lot of those, from the Ottumwa Courier twenty plus years ago, written by Judy Krier following her visit to Sixty Plus. She wrote that Virginia Dalbey had been organizing the monthly gatherings for twenty years at that. So that adds up to over forty years now! Judy mentioned the wonderful people making up that group and the tasty dishes shared. In the early years, there were very few males in attendance, but that has certainly changed! Reading that writing by Judy, took my thoughts back to some very special people. I could still see that first table inside the dining hall, surrounded

by Margie Holliman, Reba McWilliams, Edna Versteegh, Beverly Cruzen, Norma Fredrickson and others who were such a value to our community. Thanks to Virginia for realizing the importance of this social event and to all who continue to gather. Come join us!

On Wednesday the 4th, Greg's Aunt Martha Perkins observed her birthday...her 109th Birthday! I plan to deliver her gooseberry pie in the next couple days. I am sure she enjoyed many good wishes.

Thursday was the big day with a trip to Keokuk County for Sit 'n Stitch at Fiddle Dee Dee in Keota. I am always excited to see everyone there, and to have lunch with Lorie. I certainly do enjoy retirement, and I am so happy to have made that trip almost two years ago when I knew none of these ladies, and never felt like a stranger!

The way home took me to Hedrick for the meeting of the Auxiliary. There was a lot to discuss there with several activities to plan. Again a very enjoyable group!

But that wasn't all. In the evening, Dixie and I headed to Kirkville to be with Patchwork Peddlers. Greg and Larry spent the time we were gone playing cribbage, which they really enjoy. I'm thinking this group has been together for around twenty years now, beginning with Snowman of the month for the first year. A few of the charter members still display those embroidery projects each month. Thanks to Kris Kelderman who shares her home with us.

And then came garden club on Friday, of which I joined right after my retirement. And I have trouble believing that was almost eleven years ago! I am so blessed to have each group and to be able to enjoy the company of so many, doing the things I love. Aren't we lucky to have communities as we do?

Not as much, but plenty to do again this week. It's still dark out and I won't be surprised if a nap will be required before darkness returns this day. Wishing you a good week!

## VIEWPOINT from pg. 4

sworth had to shovel snow drifts out of the road, leading as far as the schoolhouse. Every night, it either snowed again or the drifted in again. That winter, Velna was pregnant with her firstborn son, Beryl. One afternoon, she called Dr. Johnson to come over; temperatures sank far below zero, but Johnson stayed the night, and delivered her baby the next afternoon.

In December, 1926, there was a storm with heavy sleet, that covered everything in ice. One day, the mule Leo was riding, Jack, slipped on

this ice, landing on Leo's leg and breaking it. Jack the mule stood up with his head over Leo's face, as if to say "I'm sorry." Afterward, one of Leo's legs was shorter than the other.

Velna's memoirs contained one more story, about a memorable Christmas, one far less pleasant than the memories of receiving a doll or a proposal on Christmas Eve. Next week, I'll share the story of Velna's newborn son Paul, lying in the hospital on Christmas Eve, with the doctors only giving him a 50-50 shot of living.

## COUNTRY GIRL'S CORNER

# March Madness

By Sheryl L. Carter

I bet that rabbit that my big cat, Petey, brought up to the house this morning and deposited it right in front of the door thought it was madness, as his life had been quickly extinguished. Petey was jubilant! A mighty hunter is he! That was a big rabbit, too, as after Petey got what he wanted, I bagged it up and put it in the trash bin. I bet that thing weighed four to five pounds.

March has come in with bright, warm sun, and two nights of rains! We had puddles out in the driveway by the sidewalk, a joy to see as it has gotten very dry. I don't have my rain gauge out yet, but thinking it was a good bit.

I had planned to attend the CEF supper at the First Federated Church in Pella last Tuesday evening, as Scottie

and Dorothy are involved, but my plans changed when the pain in my left lower jaw worsened. That afternoon late, I was able to see my dentist at his Tuesday clinic uptown, and he ordered an antibiotic, so I immediately drove into Pella to pick it up. Also got in the week's grocery shopping, and ran Jazzy through the car wash. It was disappointing not to be able to attend, as I was also going to help out with the meal for our table, but they carried on without me.

On Thursday I was in Grinnell to the dentist's main office for an all-around x-ray which revealed a massive abscess in the lower left molar, plus the nerve is dying. Ouch. That is some real pain, and it took over two days for the meds to finally take effect. That afternoon, I felt enough

better to put my yearly taxes together.

Friday, I was in Newton for my tax appointment to meet the sweet young accountant from last year. She looked through all my figures, put them on her computer, then turned to me and said, "Because of the \$6,000 discount on income for seniors this year, plus your mileage, you don't have to file!" Yippee! Good news for sure. Back out in Jazzy, I called up a friend who lives in there, and spent a couple of hours at her house catching up.

Yesterday I got the week's wash cared for, the check book balanced, did a little housework, and made pizza for supper. This was a good pizza for sure. I had purchased one at the store on Tuesday, as it looked so good, and thought it would

be a little treat not requiring any prep on my part. It looked good, I said—well, it wasn't. They lied. It was actually awful. I guess when you are used to homemade food, your taste buds are simply spoiled, and this stuff did not measure up at all.

Last night it was time to set the clocks back. The bird clock here in my office has stayed on DST, as I didn't even bother to change it last spring. It's a big clock and tricky to hang back on its nail, so I just left it. At least it was light outside when I got up an hour earlier this morning.

Today has been a beautiful warm and sunny spring day as I went out to Sunday school and church this morning. I need to go out in it before the sun goes down.

Have a great week!

## KEOTA COUNCIL from pg. 2

ward, said the idea developed after earlier discussions about improving the Eagle Trail behind the school and learning that transportation funding may be available through Rural Planning Area 15.

Pedrick said the TAP program offers up to \$280,000 and requires a 20% local match. During discussion, several possible funding sources were mentioned, including applying to the Keokuk County Endowment Fund to help cover part of the match.

Council members noted that even if the project is not immediately funded, the city would still have an updated trail plan ready for future grant opportunities.

In other business, the council approved demolition

of the property at 108 W. Keokuk Ave. without discussion. The matter returned to the council after the mayor vetoed action taken at the previous meeting.

The council also set public hearings for upcoming city financial matters. A hearing on the proposed fiscal year 2027 property tax levy will be held at 6:30 p.m. Monday, March 16, at City Hall. A hearing on the proposed fiscal year 2027 budget is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Monday, April 6.

During department reports, public works staff said the city dump remains busy and spring maintenance has begun on seasonal equipment. Water flows remain slightly higher than expected following a recent water

main break, and staff plan to conduct leak detection next week to locate a possible underground leak.

Public Works also reported a leaking backflow preventer at the water plant and said they are exploring whether a standard backflow prevention device could be used instead of a more expensive reduced-pressure unit. Wastewater plant operations have run smoothly through the winter.

The Keota Public Library reported strong attendance, with more than 30 people participating in recent events. Library staff also said accreditation paperwork was submitted last week, securing state funding eligibility for another three years.

The council approved

payroll for Bridget Greiner, February timesheets and comp time, and set March 16 as the application deadline for two public works intern positions. The council also approved attendance for city staff at upcoming clerk training conferences in April.

Council members also discussed possible updates to the city's ordinance regulating peddlers, solicitors, transient merchants, and food truck operations, though no formal action was taken.

During council comments, officials also noted that spring cleanup and citywide garage sales will be held in the coming weeks and encouraged residents to begin preparing for the annual events.

## Local Students Make Indian Hills Honor Roll

The following students made the Indian Hills Community College Winter 2025 Honor Roll. To be eligible, students must receive a GPA of at least 3.5.

**Hedrick**  
Renae J. Eubanks, Kayla

Bunnell, Izabella H. Earnest, Ayla L. Banas

**Keota**  
Luke B. Moeller

**Keswick**  
Haley M. Thomas, Kenzi R. Van Den Heuvel, Levi A. Molyneux

**North English**

Garin M. Schaffner

**Ollie**  
Sarah N. Berg, Katelynn G. Schultz

**Packwood**  
Chloe L. Glosser, Logan M. Johnson

**Sigourney**

Dawson F. Meyer, Cloee J. Wilson, Ella G. Bahlmann, Josh R. Vermillion, Adalynne M. Tremmel, Wyatt R. Wehr, Krista N. Sellers



On March 2, the Pekin Varsity Quiz Bowl team placed second out of eight teams at the Waco Quiz Bowl tournament. On March 4, the Pekin JV Quiz Bowl team won the Van Buren Quiz Bowl tournament. The Varsity team came in fourth. Pictured: the teams at Van Buren. Photo credit: Pekin Facebook page

## BUSINESS DIRECTORY

**WATTS**  
Vault & Monument Co.

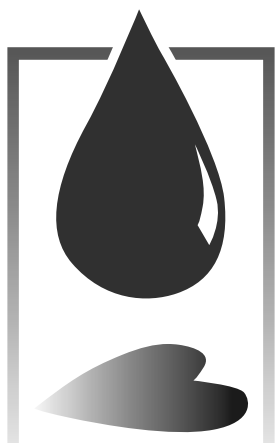
Hwy. 63 North,  
Montezuma

641-623-2158

www.wattsvault.com

HOURS:  
Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Or By Appointment

MAKE TIME



saving lives  
is in your blood

To donate blood at a location near you, visit [www.aabb.org](http://www.aabb.org)

## Online Grant Writing 101 Workshop Set for April 1

By Esther Crompton

AMES - Representatives of nonprofits, government agencies and school districts can learn the essentials of developing strong grant proposals during an online Grant Writing 101 workshop on April 1, from 9-11 a.m. The session is offered by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development.

Grant Writing 101 provides foundational training

for individuals who want to identify funding opportunities and prepare clear, competitive applications. The workshop reviews common grant terminology, how to locate funding sources and practical strategies for planning and writing a successful proposal.

"Grant writing is easier to approach when you understand the process," said Lindsay Henderson, development specialist with ISU Extension and Outreach. "This

workshop breaks the work into practical steps, helping you move from identifying funders to writing a strong proposal."

Henderson emphasized that the workshop is designed for people at all levels of experience. "Some participants come in having never written a grant, while others want to refine their approach," she said. "No matter their background, they leave with tools they can immediately apply to improve their next appli-

cation."

The session also covers how to outline project goals, gather supporting information, avoid frequent pitfalls and strengthen budget and narrative components.

The registration fee is \$40 per participant, and advance enrollment is required.

For more information, visit the [www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/grant-writing-workshops](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/grant-writing-workshops) or contact Lindsay Henderson at [lindsayh@iastate.edu](mailto:lindsayh@iastate.edu).