

Bolin's career switch a sweeping success



BY JOHN HAUER

For the Daily Call

pdceditorial@civitasmedia.com

PIQUA — Piqua High School second shift custodian Larry Bolin made a big career change four years ago when he traded his shop box of mechanic's tools for a cart of custodial cleaners and fix-its. The 22-year veteran mechanic at the Paul Sherry dealership became a Piqua City Schools employee in 2009. And the always smiling and personable Bolin has never regretted making the switch.

Bolin was born in West Liberty, Ky., but the family moved to Ohio, and he graduated from Houston High School in 1978. He spent his junior and senior years at the Upper Valley Joint Vocational School where he earned his certificate in the auto mechanics program. "I worked at several area auto shops and tire stores," he said. "Then in 1988, I started at Paul Sherry Chevrolet." After 10 years of working on cars, he switched to the recreational vehicle repair department and spent

12 years with the RVs.

"It was a good job, but I wanted to try something new," he said. Bolin needed a change, and he found it when he talked to a former colleague of his at Paul Sherry who had taken a job with Piqua City Schools. "Richard Cruikshank worked with me at Paul Sherry and left to become the custodian at Wilder Intermediate School," Bolin said. "He loved it, and it all sounded very good to me."

Bolin took the Civil Service test to work at PCS, and in 2009, he was hired to be a part-time and fill-in custodian. He worked at most of the district's buildings, and after a year, was hired full-time to be the second shift custodian at the high school. "This is a much calmer atmosphere," he said. "I manage my time, so I can complete everything I'm assigned to do."

His responsibilities are the second floor and part of the first floor in the classroom wing of the building. This includes 44 classrooms and four restrooms plus the hallways. During the winter, he also helps clean up



MIKE ULLERY/STAFF PHOTO

Piqua High School custodian Larry Bolin has never regretted leaving a long career as a mechanic at the Paul Sherry dealership to become a Piqua City Schools employee in 2009.

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after girls and boys basketball games. Asked if he helps at home with the cleaning, Bolin smiled and said 'some.' "I do still use my mechanic's tools because I work on my own cars, and my kids manage to bring their cars around when there is a problem," Bolin said.

Second shift is 2-10

p.m., so most of the students and staff are gone by 4 p.m. "It gets a little lonely at night, but I have my trusty radio for company," he said. "The building can make some very strange noises at night, and the occasional door slam will get my attention."

Bolin has a smile and personal greeting for everyone he meets in the

hallways. "This is a great job," he said. "The students and staff here are so friendly. I'm happy I made the career change."

Away from his duties at PHS, Bolin enjoys biking, fishing, and being with the grandkids. He and his wife Debra who works part-time at the Piqua Library have been married 16 years. Between them, they have two sons and

two daughters. Heather Witt is a stay at home mom with two kids living in Tipp City. Jennifer Morgan, a district manager for Diversified Cleaning, has two kids and is living in Piqua. James Thompson is an applicator for Crop Production in Bradford. Mitchell Bolin is a phone technician for A.O. Smith.