

Your
April
2021

Country Neighbor

Free! Take 2
and Share!

Auburn • Brownville • Cook • Falls City • Johnson • Nebraska City • Peru • Rock Port • Sabetha • Syracuse • Tecumseh



Alana Krieser Pitched a No-Hitter 03/19/21



Approximately 365,000 Snow Geese at the Loess Bluffs Wildlife Refuge, 03/02/21.

A Magazine from Small Town & Rural America

Voices and Views from the Valleys of the Nemaha to Sweeten your Coffee Break

Deaths so far, from Covid-19 in our “Country Neighborhood”

Source: Google Search; ‘Name’ County, Nebraska Covid




| <u>Date</u> | <u>Nemaha</u> | <u>Otoe</u> | <u>Johnson</u> | <u>Richardson</u> |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------|
| March 6 | 13 | 7 | 8 | 17 |
| March 13 | 14 | 9 | 8 | 18 |
| March 20 | 14 | 9 | 8 | 18 |
| March 27 | 14 | 9 | 9 | 18 |

The more contagious “UK variant” of Covid-19 has become a threat in Nebraska, but vaccination protects against it too.

**Shouldn’t your patriotic duty be to protect
your relatives, friends, neighbors?**

Wear a Mask! Register to get the Vaccine!

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Your Country Neighbor

Voices and Views From the Valleys of the Nemaha

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

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countryneighbor@windstream.net

Online at yourcountryneighbor.com

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"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

April Writers & Contributors

Devon Adams - 6 & 7

Stephen Hassler - 12

Merri Johnson - 10

Dorothy Rieke - 2

Janet Sobczyk - 10

Thank You!

Deaths from Covid-19 in Counties Bordering Nebraska

| Date | Kansas | | Missouri | | Iowa |
|-------|--------|--------|----------|------|---------|
| | Brown | Nemaha | Atchison | Holt | Fremont |
| 03/06 | 32 | 50 | 6 | 10 | 9 |
| 03/13 | 32 | 50 | 6 | 10 | 9 |
| 03/20 | 32 | 50 | 6 | 10 | 10 |
| 03.27 | 32 | 51 | 6 | 11 | 10 |

Total Accumlated Covid-19 Deaths in Nebraska

March 6 2222

March 13 2236

March 20 2243

March 27 2280

Check here again next month.

The Gold Of Friendship

Dorothy Rieke, Julian

What would we ever do without our close friends? Having friends in our lives to encourage, sustain, and share our joys is the ultimate in companionship.

Friends are those who believe in you and are willing to trust you with friendship. They like you regardless of your faults. True friendship is forgetting what one gives and recalling what one receives.

The outstretched hand, a kindly smile, and laughter to sustain in these troubled times are the joys of friendship. Some friends are a "comfort" just being there.

Friends encourage, brighten days, and support with thoughtfulness. The association between two individuals helps each person grow and improve. In fact, deep friendships often bring out the best in each participant.

Our friends represent a wide world of ideas, thoughts, actions, and opinions. These are apparent and can be adopted to improve our lives. New friends are gifts because they introduce one to personal thoughts and ideas.

Through friends we see our good traits because they often reflect our lifestyles and our choices. In fact, friendships often cause us to look to our own motives and goals. Through friendships, we grow and change.

Certain rules improve and prolong friendships. The following are suggestions for very special long-lasting friendships:

- 1 Never interfere or try to change friends. You must accept and value them as they are.
- 2 Always employ honesty, trustworthiness, and integrity when dealing with close friends.
- 3 Use humor to relieve stress and tension.
- 4 Be generous, thoughtful, and considerate. Make sympathizing and supporting priorities.
- 5 Have you inadvertently hurt your friend's feelings? Be contrite and apologize saying you're sorry. Never repeat a wrong action.
- 6 Make an effort to understand your friend's opinions, feelings, and concerns.
- 7 Maintain compassion. People need others to care. A friend should be the first to assist, console, and comfort.
- 8 Evaluate your side of friendship. Are you doing enough to keep in touch and support?
- 9 Be the kind of friend you'd like to have.
- 10 Fulfill others' needs with good deeds and thoughtful actions.
- 11 Recognize your imperfections. Try to correct them before they become barriers between your friend and you.
- 12 Above all, don't blame others for your inadequacies.

Friends serve as an ingredient for our "recipe for living." They influence, support, and care. They yield the joys of companionship, bring out the best in us, give hope for the future, and represent a number of wonderful qualities rolled into one. Friendship symbolizes kindness in living and selfless giving.



Snow Geese are a common sight at the Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge during the Winter months if the marsh is not frozen over.



This one's just for shock value.



When the Snow Geese rise into the air, they are an amazing sight, not to mention the sound! The unpredictability of their migration behavior makes them less well known than the large, graceful, and more uncommon Sandhill Cranes of Kearney and Grand Island areas.

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The Red-bellied Woodpecker has a red head too, but is a different species from the “Red-headed” Woodpecker.



A Downy Woodpecker can make a lot of noise for its size.



A reddish tint is characteristic of the male House Finch’s otherwise drab plumage.




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I believe this Rock Port nest has ‘moved.’ I didn’t find it’s ‘usual’ tree that I photographed last year. That tree might have fallen as did the one near Dawson a couple years ago. And this new(?) nest looks “unfinished.” But I didn’t see any activity March 20th.



No activity at the Bald Eagle nest near Dawson, March 2nd.

Drink Responsibly ARRIVE HOME SAFELY!

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I believe this nest near Rock Port is new this year.



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OTHER EYES

I walk alone on the
 nature trail, watching
 movement in the trees
 and grass and sky,
 hearing voices speak
 in languages that have
 no written symbols.
 We share this planet,
 but exist in different
 spheres, our varied
 forms and faces
 living side by side,
 as fellow creatures.
 What am I to them?
 An awkward apparition
 lacking fur or feathers?
 A figure muttering
 sounds unlike a song
 into a tiny box I hold
 up to my ear? How
 can I belong in their
 world of nature’s laws?
 I’m not on alert, or
 wary of predators who
 want to kill me. Indeed,
 we humans seem to
 take for granted that
 we are free from danger.
 Seen through other
 eyes, we must appear
 too stupid to know how
 close to death our
 lives are balanced.

HOME AGAIN

So long ago, it
 seems, there was
 a garden growing
 by the path beside
 the barn. On one
 side were poles
 bending from the
 weight of snap
 fresh beans that
 hung on snaky
 vines. Tomatoes,
 sunshine warm,
 were waiting to be
 picked. On the
 other side were
 tall blooms that
 hid a three-year
 old from sight. I
 loved the velvet
 butterflies and soft
 striped caterpillars,
 but gave up space
 to buzzy bodies
 with sharp stingers.
 Now I’ve grown tall
 and old, but the
 path is still there,
 leading to it’s magic
 patch of petals and
 perfume, wrapped
 in all the colors of
 a flower rainbow.

Your Country Neighbor

Your “2-cups-of-coffee” companion

including local photos and articles

with the flavor of rural America.

THE HAPPY HIPPY

She stays out of sight,
because her magic is
best kept secret. Making
violets out of snow only
works at night, under a
moon shadow. But the
dandelions pop up when
your back is turned, and
you can't see her take
them out of her basket
and throw them on the
ground. She dances
barefoot through the
woods, and mushrooms
grow in the tracks of
her toes. Long hair
billows behind her like
the golden streaming
mane on a wild pony.
Shining bracelets jingle
as she sings through
the sighing grass and
whistles up a meadowlark.
Her flowing dress is full
of light and she wears
a chain of daisies for
a crown. She is Mother
Nature, the original
happy hippy!

TRY TO CRY

I dare you to feel
sad when you see
the sun melting into
red-hot lava as it
sets behind lacy
oak trees waiting
for the green spring
dresses that they
ordered last October.
Just try to shed a
tear if you see a
spotted fawn this
spring watching you
watching him. In
case you missed
the waves of geese
making ripples in
the sky, tomorrow
dawns with robins
on the lawn, and
jenny wrens singing
happy songs beside
your door. It's not
possible to drip out
tears of depression
when sweetness
surrounds us, like
soft angel wings.

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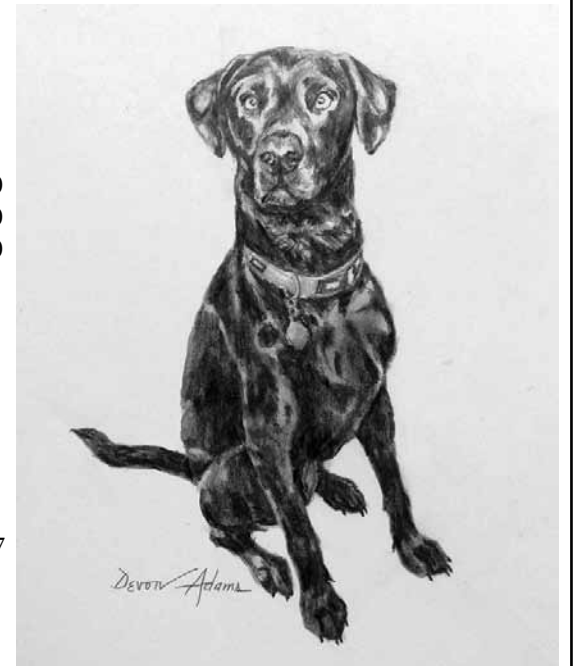
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DREAM TRAIN

Schedules don't count
when you're sleeping
on the night train.
It stops at stations
that make sense
only in the universe
inside your brain.
You are the engineer,
but all your thoughts
are unconscious.
As the wheels clack
and the car sways,
you are lured to the
well of deeper sleep
that holds mysteries
beyond imagination.
The whistle blows,
as the train stops
at a cold and windy
platform. Do you step
off and explore, or do
you ride farther into
the dreaming darkness?

IF YOU LISTEN

In the whispers
of the wind are
words of wisdom
coming from old
memories. Earth
remembers how
life is always
dancing in a
circle that goes
around and comes
around. Lessons
learned the hard
way blow away,
like crumpled
letters to ourselves.
Then the story
starts again, with
new kids on the
block, who make
the same mistakes,
and call them better
ways of living.



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|---|---------|
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| (S) '11 Toro Ground Master 3280-D, 72" deck, 839 hrs, diesel, stk 378346..... | \$7,500 |
| (A) '03 JD X485, 62" deck, 820 hrs, hydro, stk 371087..... | \$4,460 |
| (A) '18 JD Z540M, 54" deck, 102 hrs, stk 374460..... | \$4,295 |
| (A) '17 JD Z930R, 54" deck, 441 hrs, stk 371382..... | \$9,400 |
| (S) '16 JD Z950R, 60" deck, 502 hrs, stk 373115..... | \$8,950 |
| (S) '13 JD 997, 72" deck, 2530 hrs, diesel, stk 322280..... | \$7,800 |
| (S) '08 Grasshopper 223, 60" deck, 615 hrs, stk 373256..... | \$3,495 |
| (S) '04 JD 777, 60" deck, 1911 hrs, stk 381639..... | \$3,000 |
| (S) '14 JD Z930R, 54" deck, 1097 hrs, stk 320772..... | \$6,200 |

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Approximately 365,000 Snow Geese at the Loess Bluffs Wildlife Refuge, March 2, 2021. (Not all in this photo.)

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Fair Weather Friend

Janet Sobczyk, Omaha, © 2021

At daybreak she yawns,
stretches, checks the weather
rain dissuades her
no use going out today.

Others awake, arise
make breakfast
encourage her to go out
it won't be so bad.

She shivers at the open door
feels the wind
backs away
not today.

Stays by the window
gazing at the storm
listening, waiting
resolved to stay inside.

Patter of raindrops slows
wind dies down
she's still reluctant
not wanting to get wet.

Owner scoops her up
declares she must
opens the door
plops her on soggy ground.

She looks up disgruntled
tiptoes away
does business quickly
scampers back.

Tolerates the toweling
grabs squeaky toy
runs in circles
relieved it's time to play!

Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson, Auburn

"When it rains, it pours," right? The 3.75 inches we recorded here March 13 to 14 was very much needed. I don't know if Nemaha County is officially out of drought status as a result, but it surely went a long ways toward replenishing the sub-soil moisture. We had very little runoff in our yard.

That old adage quoted above applies to more than Morton salt and actual rainfall. We use it to describe any number of situations that deliver more of something than we expected or wanted.

Take physical infirmities, for example. In my December column, I mentioned that Hubby was nursing a sore back, thus curtailing our usual winter hiking at Indian Cave State Park. We broke the fast on hiking on March 6. It was a gorgeous day to be out on the North Ridge Trail and Hubby felt good. But, he barely got his hiking boots off back at home when he experienced a sharp pain in the bottom of his right heel. Some on-line research suggested a strained Achilles tendon. More research turned up a video demonstrating at-home exercise therapy for the condition. Hubby did the exercises and kept off his feet for several days.

But then, the forecast for rain stirred his former-farmer instinct to get our four rain barrels set up to collect the bounty. But before the barrels could be connected to the downspouts, the barrel platforms and downspout connector had to be repaired. So, only five days into his recovery – while I was gone for two hours – he undertook to haul a load of concrete blocks in my garden wagon approximately one full block over turf. Not only was my wagon overloaded, but the lack of paved surface meant that pulling it was very strenuous. I got home in time to see him puffing his way up the incline across our back yard.

My initial concern was for my wagon. "That wagon has an 80-pound weight limit you know," I informed him. Feeling a bit of guilt for that, I then noted that he was obviously overdoing it, and offered to do the rest of the manual labor, under his direction. That meant a fair amount of lifting heavy boards and concrete blocks, and trekking up and down the back deck steps at least three times to get tools from Hubby's workshop.

All of Hubby's exertion set his tendon recovery back by a noticeable degree. So, another four days later he actually went to the doctor. Yes, it was Achilles tendonitis, and yes, the exercises were appropriate, and here is a prescription for a steroid to speed up the heel healing.

Hubby is still hobbling today, on day eleven. It's good the golf course is too soggy for play or he would probably be overdoing it again. Maybe by this weekend, which coincides with the first day of spring, he will be able to get on the course with a cart.

Too bad we don't have a riding lawn mower. All that wonderful rain, plus sunshine and warmer temperatures, means that mowing cannot be too far into the future. Looks like yours truly will be behind the mower for the first mowing anyway. Perhaps I should do some of those Achilles tendon stretches to get in shape myself. We don't need two invalids at the same time around here!!



More snow geese, same time, same place.
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Unlikely that this many will return before next November.
Google "Loess Bluffs Waterfowl Counts" before your visit.

April 2021

Your Country Neighbor

11

Daffodils & Memories

Stephen Hassler, Peru



My sister's daffodils, 03/26/2021

Photo by J. Hassler

Daffodils are my favorite Spring flower. I prefer the simple, all yellow, non-hybrid ones, like in the field of daffodils in the movie, "Doctor Zhivago." Seeing my daffodils "sprouting" (below), makes me think of the movie and the image of that beautiful scene that has stayed with me since the late 60's when I went with a few friends to see the movie. Later in my life, as a teacher I would occasionally meet students named "Lara," after the beautiful star in the film. Similarly, some mothers named their daughters "Darla" after the pretty child star of "Our Gang," a comedy series about kids in a poor neighborhood, 1935 to 1941. I watched re-runs when I was a boy.

So many images from my college days; summertime with friends at Fremont lakes or the Louisville recreation area, fish and chips at the Dundee Dell on Saturday night after touch football, a 4th of July weekend trip to the Ozarks and a beautiful sunset over Table Rock Lake, dinner of sweet and sour pork at Lee's house before the "Big Red" bowl game, watching the full moon rise over the Missouri with my first steady girlfriend.

I sit "remembering" as if there won't be any more memorable times, but as long as life goes on, there are memories to be "made," more living to look back on, and perhaps more fields of daffodils swaying in the sun.



My daffodils are late this year. When I lived in Texas, they opened at the end of January and bloomed all through February.

This taken in my yard on March 26.

Window On Fifth Street

Stephen Hassler, Peru

Through my window on Fifth Street I watch many good people pass by. When I meet someone, I try to give them the benefit of any doubt. I often give my trust before it is earned. This somewhat naive approach has benefits and drawbacks. It accelerates acquiring friends, but it invites betrayal.

I don't like the word "hate." I dislike some people, but I don't hate anyone. If I really dislike someone or their wrongful action, I put them on "my list." Once back-stabbed, I don't bother trying to get even, I just put the person on my list. It's healthier than "getting my Irish up."

I heard recently that the opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference. "Indifferent" is a good word to describe how I feel about the entries on my list. I don't like to think that I have enemies, but regardless, there's no benefit for anyone being on my list.

If someone is on my list, it might be because they put me on their list first. I usually give everyone a lot of slack, so if they put me on their list, it might have been due to me calling them out for doing something wrong, or trying to do something wrong, to someone or to some group. So if that's the case, keep me on that list. I want to stay there. But possibly they were manipulated by lying gossip from someone they trusted as a friend. So who might one say is responsible?

Anyone who makes my list is helpless to get off it. They just took things too far. However, I might drop an entry from my list. I did that recently. The person didn't die, they didn't apologize or make amends, I just don't think about them anymore. They are not wanted nor needed in my world, and so I don't need them on my list. They might be worthwhile for something or to someone, but not to me.

This has just been a kind of self-thought exercise. People who might be on my list are not the type who read this paper. So if you are reading this, it's unlikely that you are on anyone's list. Good for you, and Happy Spring!

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PSC Women's Volleyball Scrimmage

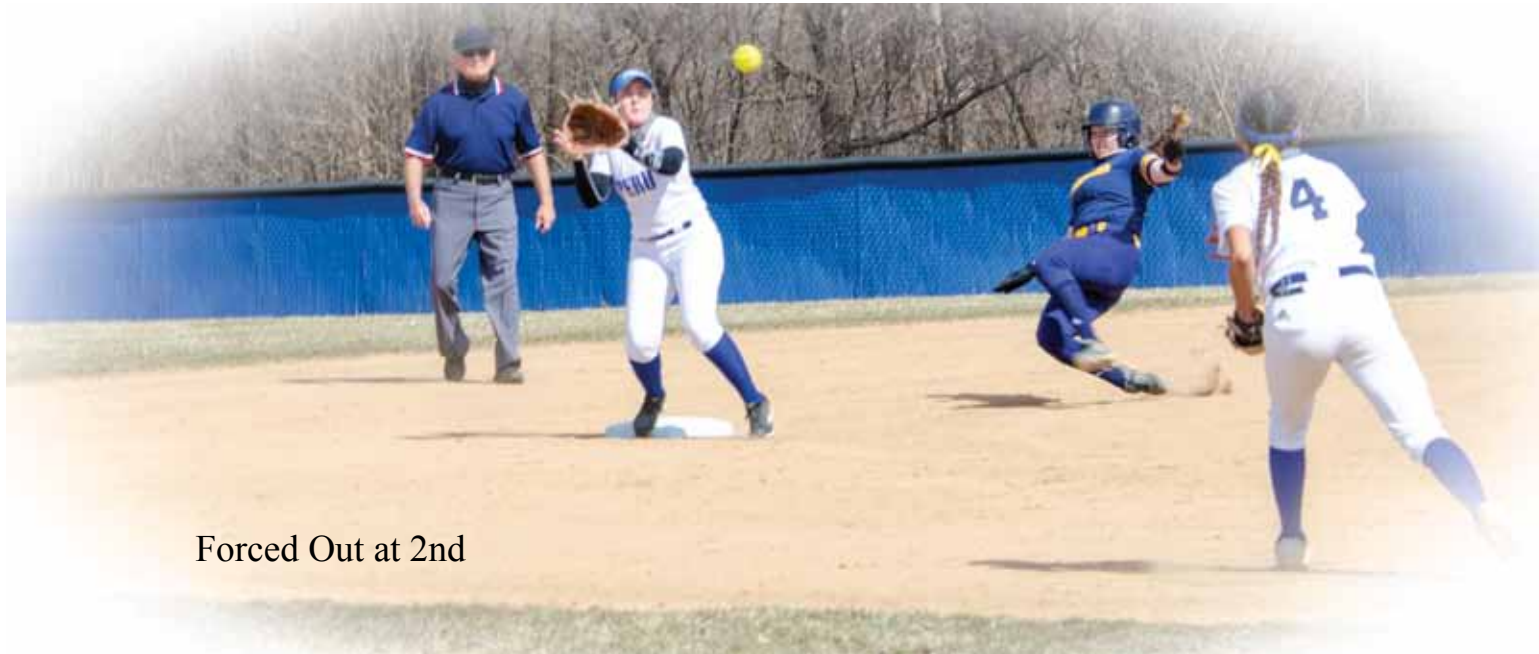
March 20, PSC *Bobcats* v Baker U. *Wildcats* Scrimmage
Visit pscbobcats.com





PSC Women's Softball

March 8, PSC *Bobcats* v College of St. Mary *Flames*, W, 9-1
Visit pscbobcats.com



Forced Out at 2nd



Peru State College News

PSC Women's Basketball to Host "Breakthrough Basketball" April 17 and 18

The Peru State women's basketball team will be hosting a Shooting & Ball Offensive Skills Camp with Coach Joel Hueser through Breakthrough Basketball. The camp will be held April 17 and 18 in the Al Wheeler Activity Center on the College's campus.

The camp will be for boys and girls grades 5-10 in which players will have an opportunity to train and improve their game under the direction of Coach Hueser. The focus will be on skills and strategies Coach Hueser has used over the last few years to help hundreds of youth players achieve next-level development.

Some of the skills which will be worked on will be: shooting fundamentals – quickly boost field goal and free throw percentage, common mistakes which limit players' shooting ability, how to develop a quick release, the "Steve Nash Adjustment," proper body positioning, techniques for creating space, pro-level secrets, catch-and-shoot fundamentals, and the "shooters mentality."

The cost for the two-day training is \$195. A limited number of spots are still available.

For more information and to reserve a spot, go to:
<https://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/camps/>

PSC President Hanson Receives DAR's *Distinguished Citizenship Award*

Dr. Dan Hanson, president of Peru State College, was awarded the Distinguished Citizenship Award from the Nebraska *Daughters of the American Revolution* (DAR). The DAR Distinguished Citizen Medal recognizes individuals, who fulfill the qualities of honor, service, courage, leadership, and patriotism.

Marilyn Woerth, National Security Chair for the Nebraska DAR, presented the Medal to Hanson. She was joined by District 1 Senator Julie Slama, First Lady Elaine Hanson and Deborah Solie, the City of Peru's Disaster Recovery Coordinator. Slama wrote Hanson's nomination letter, "Dr. Hanson has been a guiding light for Peru during times of crisis. Peru sustained catastrophic flood damage in March 2019, leaving our community reeling and in need of millions of dollars in infrastructure repair."

Slama continues, "Dr. Hanson was on the front lines to help Peru recover from the floods by leading the Northeast Nemaha County Flood Recovery Group and successfully advocating for our region with state and federal government officials."

Hanson's nomination included a detailed timeline of his leadership from the time of the flood in March 2019, to the time of the nomination. Key events highlighted include students and employees joining the sandbagging efforts in preparation for the flood, work with the community to rework infrastructure including formation of the Nemaha County Long Term Recovery Group.

First No-Hitter in Seven Years!

For the first time since May 1, 2014, the Peru State softball team recorded a no-hitter in their opening game 1-0 win over William Penn in Oskaloosa, Iowa, on March 19th.

Alana Krieser (Lincoln) tossed the no-hitter, believed to be just the seventh in Peru State history behind good pitching on her part and excellent defense by her Bobcat teammates.

The last no-hitter pitched was by Devon (Massengale) Barnes against Evangel (MO) in the opening round of the conference tournament.

After throwing 14 innings for two complete games and not allowing any runs in the games, Bobcat sophomore pitcher Alana Krieser was named as the Heart of America Athletic **Conference's Pitcher of the Week.**

PSC Bowling Tryouts April 11

The Peru State bowling coaching staff will be hosting tryouts for both their women's and men's teams on Sunday, April 11, 2021. The tryouts will be held at the Bowldog Alley in Auburn, Neb. – the home practice facility for the teams. The tryouts will be held from 1 to 3 p.m.

During the tryouts, future Bobcat bowlers will have an opportunity to meet Peru State bowling consultants Bob Benoit and Skip Wilson. The owners of Bowldog Alley, Nate and Jeni Seitz, coaching assistants for the program, will also be in attendance.

There are athletic and academic scholarships available for those who join the Bobcat bowling program.

A tour will be available at the College after tryouts are finished.

For additional information and/or to sign-up for the tryout, contact Brenda Lutz, bowling coordinator, at either **402-872-2350 or blutz@peru.edu.**

The tryouts are available for transfer students and current high school seniors and juniors.





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