

Your
August
2025

Country Neighbor

Free!
Take One



Sweeten your Coffee Break with these Voices and Views from the Valleys of the Nemaha River.



Summer Clouds, July Corn, and a Prairie Icon still hanging on.



BMX was a popular attraction at Nebraska City's "TreeStock."



Young Deer on Steamboat Trace -- July 22, 2025
More Wildlife Photos on pages 5 & 6

CONTENTS

Your "Window With a View" of Small Town and Rural America

| | |
|--|----------|
| "August"..... | 2 |
| Merri's Diary..... | 3 |
| Summer in Brownville..... | 4,5 |
| John Chatelain's "In The Beginning"..... | 7 |
| Marty's "Water Tower Cleaning"..... | 7 |
| Wildlife Photos..... | 1,5,6,18 |
| DiAnna's Tuesday Club Book Review..... | 8 |
| ♥ Valentino's Coupon for up to Six!..... | 10 |
| "A Prairie Love"..... | 12 |
| "Letters From The Prairie"..... | 12 |
| "Westward With The Corps," Chapter Three..... | 13 |
| Arbor City News..... | 14,15,16 |
| Nebraska City Morton-James Public Library Calendar.... | 14 |
| Nancy Feeney's "Heritage Guild News"..... | 15 |
| TreeStock Photos..... | 16 |
| "The Ghost of Wildwood House"..... | 17 |
| Devon Adams' Poetry & Portraits..... | 18 |
| Bruce Madsen's "Family Reunion"..... | 19 |
| "Window On Fifth Street"..... | 19 |
| Larson Mortors Customer Appreciation Day..... | 20 |

“Your Country Neighbor” is delivered to the following communities in Southeast Nebraska & NW Missouri.
Auburn • Brownville • Cook • Falls City • Johnson • Julian • Nebraska City
Nemaha • Papillion • Peru • Rock Port • Syracuse • Tecumseh • Verdon

Your Country Neighbor

Voices and Views from the Valleys of the Nemaha
Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

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www.yourcountryneighbor.com

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This Month’s Writers & Contributors

Devon Adams 18
John Chatelain 7
Nancy Feeney 15
Stephen Hassler 19
Merri Johnson 3
DiAnna Loy 8
Bruce Madsen 19
Morton-James Public Library Calendar 14
Marty Peregoy 7
Thank You!

*“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead
where there is no path and leave a trail.”*
Ralph Waldo Emerson

*“People will forget what you said, people will for-
get what you did, but people will never forget how
you made them feel.”* Maya Angelou

*“Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very
important that you do it because no one else will.”*
Ghandi

August Settles In

August doesn’t announce itself—it settles. The garden no longer races to grow; it simply breathes. The air hangs heavier, and even the crickets slow their song. School supplies appear on store shelves, but out here, there’s still time to harvest tomatoes, stretch out in a hammock, or lose a Sunday afternoon in a berry patch.

The fields are tall now—corn tasseling out, soybeans deepening to dark green. On a country drive, you might pass a roadside stand with produce, often with a tin can for payment and a neighbor’s trust beside it. Melons thump ripe under dusty leaves. Cucumbers arrive faster than recipes can keep up. Zinnias lean toward the sun, unruly and brilliant.

Porches are quieter, but just as full. A good fan, a chilled glass, and a story well told still make for fine company. In the distance, thunderheads gather—those late-summer prairie storms that shake the sky and vanish into golden light.

August is a time of ripening—fruit on the vine, plans half-finished, and patience wearing thin. June flirts, July sprints, and August... well, August just leans on the porch rail and says, “You’ll get to it when you get to it.” It knows better than to rush you.

So let this issue be a place to pause. Among these pages you’ll find glimpses of prairie life in full bloom, continuing chapters of stories rooted in weather, memory, and heart, and thoughtful reflections from your neighbors—wandering or otherwise.

We’re glad you’re here. And if you find a basket of tomatoes left on your porch, you’ll know: it’s August.

So here’s to a ripening, lingering August. And don’t forget to bring that Valentino’s coupon on page 10—because sometimes, the best summer meal is one you didn’t have to cook.

*“We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of
us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time, impor-
tant and needed, all of us called to row together, each
of us in need of comforting the other.”*
Pope Francis

Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson, Auburn

It's almost August, which means I've had just about as much weeding as I can take. Not to complain, but this year I have been plagued by a hip injury that is really sapping my energy. Combine that with just the right conditions for a crabgrass explosion and my yard and vegetable garden are looking pretty shabby. Weeding on my hands and knees has always been my preferred method. But the various weeds are so tall, that I have taken to loosening them with a potato fork and then grabbing the clump about a foot off the ground to pull it out.

You can still find me crawling around with a hand trowel, too, which is what I will be doing next week when I attempt to free the asparagus from everything else growing under there.

It's a darn good thing that my flower bed is so full of coneflowers that most of the weeds in there are not visible from the street.

These days, my activity to nap time ratio is pretty much 1:1, on a good day. Lots of days, I could easily take a nap morning and afternoon. Hubby has always been a regular napper, but I have always tried to stay productive until about 4:00 p.m. That seems like a reasonable time for a retired person to call it a day... or maybe 3:00, or 2:00.

Hubby is dealing with his own joint injury, but he has a lot more pep than I do. He is maintaining his golf routine, despite a torn rotator cuff. I know. How is that possible? Apparently, this is not unusual. He has, however, adjusted his lawn mowing schedule, ostensibly because it's better for the grass to let it be a bit longer than usual. Unfortunately, that gives the weeds more opportunity to go to seed before they get cut.

But I'm not complaining. Hubby is the chief cook around here and he is still getting food on the table, and cookies in the cookie jar.

Earlier today, he was preparing to bake. He is methodical about it and gets all his ingredients and utensils organized before beginning to mix things up. I have always taken more of a step-by-step approach: I locate, measure and add each ingredient in the order it comes up in the recipe. But, based on how quickly Hubby can crank out a batch of cookies, I have to admit that his technique is superior. Although, there does appear to be a bit more flour, etc., coating the countertop and the floor when he's done. Just sayin.' But clean-up is my contribution, so there you go.

We may not be firing on all cylinders these days, but two halves still make a whole around here, so I guess we're doing well enough.

Share this publication with friends.

It's online at;

yourcountryneighbor.com



Blayne Behrends

Agent

website: blaynebehrends.com

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Annual doggie competition, Brownville, July 4th.



Bellflower on Steamboat Trace -- 07/22/2025



Red-spotted Purple Butterfly -- 07/22/2025
Common on the Steamboat Trace

5 August 2025 Your Country Neighbor

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BROWNVILLE FINE ARTS ASSOCIATION

2025 Speaker Series & Art Exhibition

Speaker Series Schedule

Saturday, June 21 • 10:00 a.m.
"IN CONTACT WITH NATURE"
by Sue Kohles

As a former employee of NSA, Sue is very familiar with the Furnas Arboretum. Her program will include a presentation and a walk highlighting the innate human connection to nature and the benefits of spending time in contact with nature.

Saturday, July 19 • 10:00 a.m.
"THE CHILDREN'S BLIZZARD"
Discussion by Dr. Bill Clemente

Book written by David Laskin. "This account of the 1888 blizzard reads like a thriller." - "Entertainment Weekly" - "...gripping true story of an epic prairie snowstorm that killed hundreds of newly arrived settlers and cast a shadow on the promise of the American frontier. January 12, 1888, began as an unseasonably warm morning across Nebraska, the Dakotas, and Minnesota, the weather so mild that children walked to school without coats and gloves."

Saturday, August 16 • 10:00 a.m.
"I AM A MAN: CHIEF STANDING BEAR'S JOURNEY FOR JUSTICE"
by Joe Starita

Joe Starita tells the enthralling story of how Chief Standing Bear peacefully fought for Native American rights. (Humanities Nebraska)

Saturday, September 13 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
BROWNVILLE STREET ART & STUDIO TOURS

Artists will have their studios open for guests as well as other artists visiting Brownville with their works for sale.



Saturday, September 13 • 10:00 a.m.
CHALK ART DEMONSTRATION
by Amy Sell

Amy Lynn Sell is a Kansas City creative artist. She uses the temporary form of chalk to create images that pull you in and make you smile and become part of your experience when you're there.

Saturday, December 6, 2025
Brownville Tour of Homes
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Rohman Garden Tree Lighting
& Christmas Carols
5:30 p.m.



Art Exhibition Schedule

Schoolhouse Art Gallery

427 Main Street • Brownville, Nebraska

Art exhibits open Thursday, Friday, & Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

If you would like to see the show at other times, please contact 402-414-2082.

May 29 to June 29
"PAINTS & THREADS"

by Carol Skinner Hammond

Artist Reception: Friday, May 30, 6:00 p.m.

Show includes watercolors and acrylics paintings of florals and landscapes. The stitchery pieces are created from wool, silk, and cotton fibers embellished with hand stitching, beads, buttons, lace, ribbons, yarns, and trims of all kinds.



July 3 to July 27
"CLEARVIEW STAINED GLASS"
by Deb Costello

Artist Reception: Friday, July 11, 6:00 p.m.

Stained glass transforms light. The constant changing conditions of daylight, coupled with the refractive properties of color, texture, and transparency within stained glass, permeate the space with a constantly changing palette of color. Deb generally uses the traditional medium of leaded stained glass, to create conventional and unconventional glass art. She has also ventured into fused glass (kiln work) as an additional enhancement to her designs. She creates unexpected imagery, hoping to offer the observer a fresh view of this vibrant classical art form.



July 31 to August 31
"OUT OF THE CHAOS COMES BEAUTY"
by Jodie Leibe

Artist Reception: Friday, August 1, 6:00 p.m.

Jodie has been creating for as long as she can remember. Ten-plus years ago she started pottery. It has taught her patience and has been a lifeline through many ups and downs. Jodie is grateful to have found a way to bring joy and beauty to herself and share with others.



September 4 to September 21
"SOME OF NEBRASKA'S FAVORITES"
Artist Reception:

Friday, September 5, 6:00 p.m.

Mary Lauber - Jewelry
Susan Sisco - Pottery
Natalie Sisco - Glass and Pottery
Cate Wycoff - Watercolor



October 7 to November 2
"A SEAT AT GRANDMA'S TABLE"
by GK Callahan

Installation includes integrating artwork with elements of corn, pheasants, and a harvest table. There will be story collections, photos and recipes evoking memories of home and the past.



Follow us on Facebook: Brownville Fine Arts Association



Giant Swallowtail butterfly & Joe Pye Weed, on Steamboat Trace -- 07/22/2025



Tiger Swallowtail butterfly & Joe Pye Weed, on Steamboat Trace -- 07/22/2025



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Cottonwood Tree, about 100 years old, along H-67 near Peru, Nebraska

PERU CITY NEWS

Communication • Information • Pride In Community

A volunteer project

supported by the Peru Community.

Thank you to everyone who participates!



Peru Water Tower Undergoing Cleaning and Renovation

Marty Peregoy

Peru's water tower is in the process of being inspected, cleaned, brought up to code, and painted inside and out. The project will likely take 3-5 weeks, depending on temperature and humidity. A new vent has already been installed, and the exterior painting has begun.

Over the past several days, the water level in the tower was lowered naturally through customer use so that the interior could be inspected. While the tower is being repaired and painted, water is flowing from the Auburn connection into a pressurized tank that acts in place of the tower.

Once painting and repairs are complete, the tower will be refilled, and two samples will be taken to Lincoln for inspection within 24 hours. If both test appropriately, the tower will be put back into service.

Inspection and maintenance of the water tower normally occurs on a five-year basis; however, due to the flood and resulting loss of the water plant, it has been eleven years. If you're interested in how inspections take place, there are several videos of water tower inspections on Google. They often involve drones and scuba divers and are very interesting: <https://youtu.be/a58B37oyQxc?si=B5CWOBhsD47XhiSh>

Several safeguards are in place to protect the safety of their drinking water. In July of this year, two departments of state, the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources and the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy merged to become DWEE. The merger combined the state's efforts in water management, energy policies, and environmental protection. The DWEE Drinking Water Section's mandate is to ensure safe drinking water for all Nebraskans via state and federal drinking water standards. The department works with a variety of partners, including water systems, communities, the Nebraska Rural Water Association and other partners.

Some of their oversight includes the following:

- Reviewing and approving construction projects for public water systems
- Inspecting water systems
- Monitoring water quality testing
- Assisting public water suppliers in preventing contamination, and
- Administering grants for lead

IN THE BEGINNING

By John C. Chatelain

Steamboat transportation was hazardous due to the sand bars and snags in the constantly changing Missouri River. Such travel reached its peak in the years from 1850 to 1860, serving Nebraska when the territory became open for settlement. It declined with the coming of the railroads.

In the early 1850's word filtered back to farmers in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio that Nebraska Territory would soon be opened for settlement. A man could obtain 160 acres of land and improve it, at which time it could be bought from the government for \$1.25 per acre. Wagon trains were soon moving westward to fertile virgin land. It could be plowed without clearing heavy timber, because prairie fires had confined the forest to sheltered valleys along the streams.

A group of pioneers were turned back at Fort Kearney (now Nebraska City) in 1853, because the territory was not yet open. They journeyed downstream through southwestern Iowa and into Missouri to Sonora Island, across the river from present day Peru. Many of them were inter-related, including James Swan and family; his sister, Ann Swan; Mr. Mellick and family; Wilson Swan, his son and daughter, Jane; Reverend W. S. Horn and family; Reverend John W. Wall, the Tate family, and the Jefferson Lee Combs family.

On Sonora Island the hearty travelers built log cabins and snuggled in. During the winter they crossed the river and preempted claims. When the territory opened in 1854, the settlers crossed the river again and officially laid their claims.

H. C. Carpenter, Henry Sessions, Jr., J. B. Gridley and Henry McKenny founded Mount Vernon in 1855. It had a small trading post. Reverend Hugh Doyle, a Methodist minister secured a post office, which opened in January 8, 1857. Located on the top of the formidable hill, the town quickly failed, because people depended on the steamboats for necessities. 1

Since most businesses existed on the river's edge, the town of Peru was soon laid out at the foot of the hill. Alfred Medley opened a blacksmith shop in 1855, near the cabin of a Mr. Still, who ran a ferry to bring settlers across the river. Medley also went into partnership with one of the Compton brothers to open a store on the bank of the river. Others who came to Peru in 1855 were F. M. Medley, R. T. McAdams and Jane Patterson. Jacob Good and B. F. McNich settled in 1856. In 1857 J. C. Wyne, David Jack, Henry Stites, J. N. McKenney, Sara (Stites) Carter, Isadora (Wyne) Hesslaine, Barbara Lash, Mary Scott, Elizabeth (Swan) Cole and Sarah Medley arrived. J.H.F. Scott, D.C. Cole, H. B. Redfern, Anna (Jackman) Robbins and Isabell Green arrived in 1858. J.F. Neal and T. J. Majors arrived in 1859. 2

Merchants did a thriving business in cordwood, grain, flour, and other products from their riverbank docks. When the Missouri River swallowed most of those buildings, the business district moved to 5th Street where it stands today. As the river moved away from town, Peru became high and dry except in time of flood.

In 1868, R. G. Smith, Dr. J. R. Neal and Samuel Pettit formed a cemetery board selecting the east half of the block on 7th Street north of Eliza Morgan Hall as the cemetery. In 1875, the cemetery was moved to the site of the old town of Mount Vernon. All the graves, which could be located were moved, but some unmarked graves remained and later excavations uncovered them. It was not entirely clear whether Peru's namesake was Peru, Illinois, from which a number of settlers hailed, or Peru, Indiana since many Hoosiers also came to the town. The dispute has generally been resolved in favor of Illinois. 3

1 The Normal on the Hill, by Ernest Longfellow, pp: 3-7.

2 Across the Wide Missouri. p.61

3 The Normal on the Hill, by Ernest Longfellow, pp: 3-7.

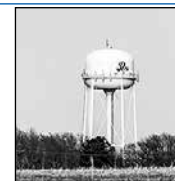
PERU CITY NEWS

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Tuesday Literary Club Reads

DiAnna Loy, Tuesday Literary Club

Marian Henderson selected *In the Unlikely Event* by Judy Blume as the book to review for Tuesday Literary Club in July. Judy Blume qualifies for our theme of senior authors because even though she wrote her first novel at the age of eight, she published this novel, possibly her last, at the age of 76. Blume is not known for writing historical fiction but has done an amazing job on this book. This book is set in Elizabeth, NJ which is Blume's hometown, where she was growing up at the same time the events of this book were happening. She has won more than 90 literary awards, including three lifetime achievement awards in the United States. Blume has led the fight against literary censorship, herself finding her books the victims of many censorship campaigns.

Fact...Elizabeth, New Jersey, is approximately four miles from the Newark Metropolitan Airport and was the location of three accidents during the winter of 1951-1952. On December 16, 1951, a Miami Airlines flight crashed shortly after takeoff, killing 56 passengers and crew. On January 22, 1952, American Airlines Flight 6780 crashed, killing 30 people including seven on the ground. And the final crash on February 11th caused 33 deaths, including four on the ground. Thirty-four people survived that crash. Within a period of 58 days 119 people lost their lives and the lives of many residents of Elizabeth were changed forever.

The first crash was remarkably close to the school Blume attended and just missed the Elk's Club where a party was being held for 100 children; the second just missed the girl's public high school; and the third plane crashed into a field next to the only orphanage in town. Blume does not center on these events as much as she tells the stories of the families whose lives were impacted.

In the first crash is Mire and her family of her mother, grandmother, uncle, and the uncle's fiancée. The first crash was near their home and Miri's uncle who was a newspaper reporter was one of the first on the scene. Miri and her family were often privileged to information that often was not common knowledge for the rest of the public. Also, there was a young dancer named Ruby on the first flight that Miri's friend Natalie thought she heard talking to her in her head. And Mr. Ben Shaphire who Miri's grandmother knew long ago and lost his wife in the crash.

On the second flight that crashed across the street from the girl's high school, after skimming the roof of the school, was passenger Robert Patterson former Secretary of War under President Truman and four students at Syracuse University. The rumors among the students at Miri's school ran rampant and in Elizabeth itself there were calls to close the airport as the only way to land was directly over the city.

After the third crash in the eight-week period where Miri's friend Mason and some of the other boys living at the orphanage were instrumental in pulling survivors out of the burning wreckage of the airplane that crashed in the field behind the building, the Elizabeth airport was closed pending further investigation.

When the Elizabeth, NJ Airport reopened in November 1952 the main runway no longer came in over the residential area of the city. But earlier this year, the Elizabeth, NJ Airport was in the news again.

This book was an excellent read keeping my attention at the turn of every page. So much more happened than I was able to touch on here. I would recommend it highly.

"Happy reading!"

<<<< Water: *Continued from page 7*
testing and reduction in drinking water in schools and childcare facilities.

The Nebraska Rural Water Association (NRWA) is a non-profit that offers assistance in complying with the Nebraska Safe Drinking Water Act and Title 179 regulations, through provision of support and resources to rural water systems.

They offer membership, training, and conferences to help water systems with licensing, system data and environmental coliform protection.

The Nebraska Safe Drinking Water Act establishes regulations to ensure the safety and quality of drinking water provided by public water systems in Nebraska, aligning with federal standards. There are twenty-six chapters within Title 179, and some of the topics include fluoridation, monitoring requirements by population, public drinking water violations, licensure of water operators, control of lead and copper, consumer confidence reports, Stage 2 disinfectants and their byproducts, and coliform rule.

In Peru, water testing is rotated among five different sites on a monthly basis. The tests are then sent into the state for analysis. In addition, an acid test is done at the end of the line every three months. Currently those tasks are being handled by Peru "Class IV Water Operator," Phil Wemhoff.

If you live in the city of Peru, you have likely been involved with some of the required water safety measures. The multi-page annual water report is published in the local paper and/or hanging in the post office for your inspection. You also have participated in the cross-contamination survey, which takes place every three years, and you may remember answering last year's State-required questionnaire regarding whether or not the water connection to your house is lead, copper or something else. With the help of DWEE and its regulations, you can rest assured that your drinking water in Peru has been tested safe for consumption, and that procedures are in place for handling a variety of water situations.

PERU CITY NEWS

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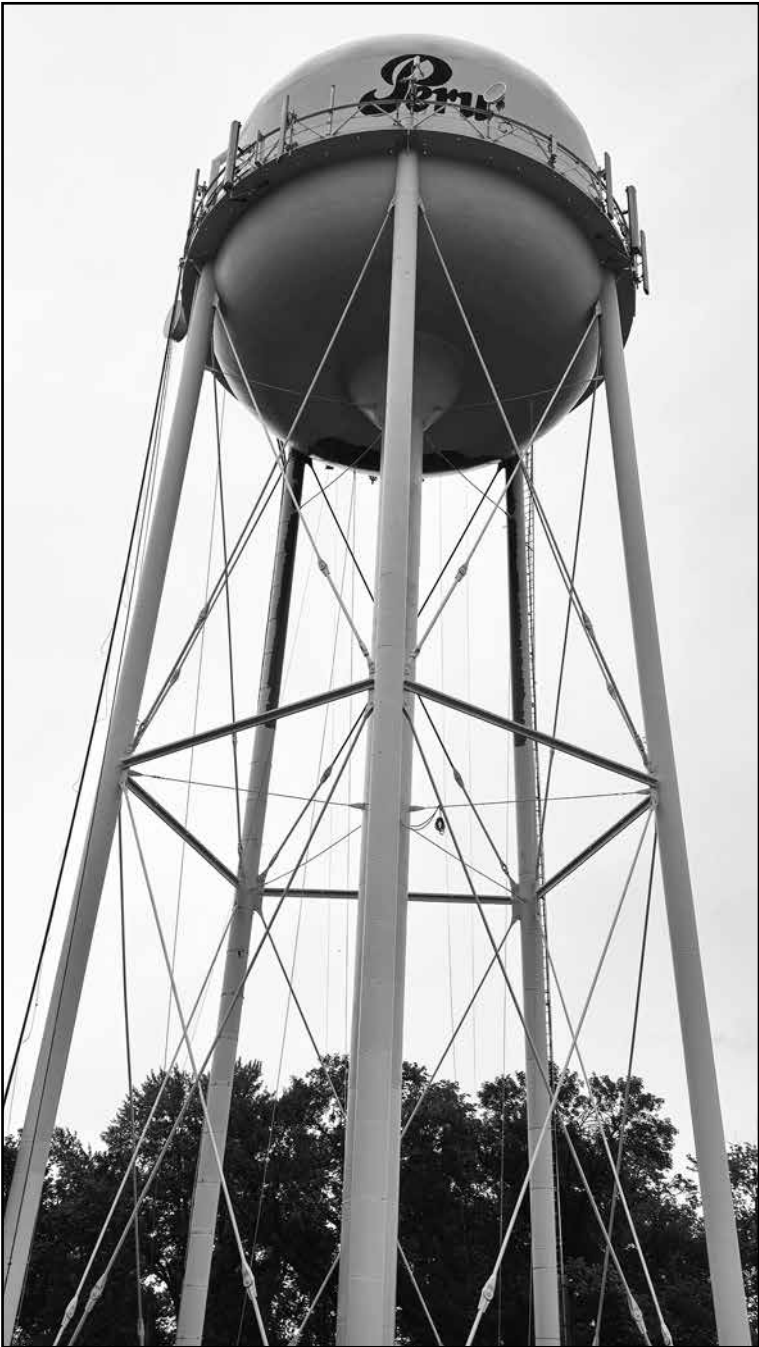
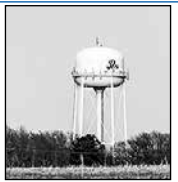


Photo #2 Peru Water Tower



Photo #1 Sludge in the Pipe.

Photo #1 - Prior to cleaning - the middle pipe between the legs of the water tower at the bottom opening.

Photo #2 - You can smell the fresh paint as you stand near the tower. Both inside and outside will be painted.



St. Clara's Catholic Church
604 6th Street
Pastor Fr. Timothy Danek
Mass - Sunday 8:30 am
Confessions - Sunday 8:00-8:20 am



Northridge Church
808 5th Street
Pastor Daniel Hutchison
Services - Sunday 10:00 am



Peru Community Church
520 Nebraska Street
Pastors Raymond & Rebecca Girard
Services - Sunday 10:45 am
August 2025 Your Country Neighbor 9

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Summer skies like this one can be threatening, but not this day. East of H-75, South of NE City.

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A Prairie Love

Chapter Five: A Candle in the Window

December 1923

Snow had dusted the prairie like sifted sugar, and the schoolhouse bell sounded soft and far in the hush of winter. Cora's students had gone home bundled in scarves and mittens, carrying handmade cards and tin-foil stars. She lingered to sweep the floor and gather her things, then turned the key with mittened hands and walked the rutted path toward home.

At the farmhouse, evergreen boughs hung over the doorway, tied with red strips torn from one of her mother's old aprons. A little cedar tree stood in the parlor, decorated with popcorn strings, dried orange slices, and one lopsided angel made from flour sack cloth. Simple, but it glowed.

Out near the barn, the windmill creaked faintly in the cold, the blades catching moonlight like a weathered star. Cora paused a moment before going inside, listening to its slow rhythm echo across the fields.

That evening, Lyle arrived with a box under his arm and a nervous look about him.

"Couldn't stay away," he said, brushing snow from his shoulders. "I brought something."

He handed her the box. Inside was a wooden candleholder carved from walnut, polished smooth. A single beeswax candle stood in the center.

"It's not much," he said. "But I thought... if you ever wonder where I am, you could light it. I'll see it."

Cora touched the smooth wood, eyes misting. "It's more than much."

She lit the candle in the parlor window.

Her father watched from the stove, saying nothing, but gave Lyle a nod that meant everything.

After supper, they sang a few old carols while Cora played piano, her voice just a little shaky on O Come All Ye Faithful.

Later, they stepped onto the porch. The stars were cold and clear.

"You can come by tomorrow," she said softly, "for music and gingerbread. Mama used to say gingerbread made the whole house feel like Christmas."

"I'd like that."

And in that glow, faint as it was, something steady and certain began to grow.

To be continued...

12 August 2025 Your Country Neighbor

Letters from the Prairie

Winter, 1887, Nemaha County, Nebraska

Fourth Letter from Anna Wilhelmine Bauer

to her sister, Klara in Germany

My dearest Klara,

Snow has come. Not the soft, fleeting kind, but a storm that swept across the prairie like a white curtain drawn tight. We woke to silence so complete, it rang in my ears. Even the rooster stood baffled, unsure of the morning.

Johann and the boys spent two days digging paths from barn to house, and still the wind piles drifts at every door. We lost a hen to the cold, poor thing, and Johann says the old cow may not last the winter. But the stove holds steady, and for that we are grateful.

In the evenings, Lena and I sit close, her small fingers learning the thread-and-thimble rhythm of mending. She chatters about everything—her doll, her lessons, the shape of frost on the windows. I see your face in hers sometimes, especially when she tilts her head to listen.

Your Emil sent a drawing of their Christmas candle wreath, with the names of each sibling written around it. I cried, Klara. Just sat and cried. How far we are from you, and yet how near in these little things.

We will cut our own tree next week. Not a fir, of course—just a scrappy cedar from the creek bend. But we'll tie ribbons and bake gingerbread, and it will shine.

With love that warms even this coldest month,
Anna

Your Country Neighbor
Your "2-cups-of-coffee" companion
including local photos and articles
with the flavor of rural America.

Chapter Three: River of Resolve
Spring 1804 – Missouri River, near St. Charles

The keelboat strained upstream, every oar-stroke a testament to the men’s resolve. Spring rains had swollen the Missouri, and the current ran fast and heavy. Trees, uprooted from far banks, swept past like wayward ghosts. The sky held a steady overcast, and though the wind was at times favorable, progress was slow, and tempers wore thin.

Elias LeGrand, hunter turned corporal, had taken up post near the rudder that morning, watching for snags and floating debris. He was shorter than most of the men but solid, with a chest like a feed barrel and a jaw carved from hard country. His hair, thick and dark, curled over his brow no matter how he fought it back, and he had a tendency to hum hymns under his breath when tension mounted. This morning, he hummed louder than usual.

Captain Lewis stood amidships, one boot up on a crate, notebook in hand. Clark handled most of the navigation, his voice calm even when the crew groaned or stumbled. Together, they struck a balance—Lewis the thinker, always observing and jotting; Clark the doer, muscles coiled, a map in mind long before ink hit parchment.

“River’s rising,” Elias muttered to himself as a log rolled past. “She’s in no mood to be tamed.”

He wasn’t speaking metaphorically. The Missouri was known to change course, to devour banks and strand travelers. Even the seasoned boatmen the Corps had hired muttered superstitions under their breath. On the bank, a long stretch of willows bent in the wind. Birds scattered as the keelboat drew near a bend where the water twisted like a coiled rope.

A shout came from the forward lookout—“Snag port side!” Clark barked orders. The men leaned in with their poles and oars, redirecting the boat just in time to miss a submerged tree. Elias let out a breath. “There’s the first devil of the river, gents. Won’t be the last.”

Later that night, camped on a narrow muddy rise beyond the bend, the men set about their routines—drying gear, cooking salted pork, scribbling letters or journal entries if they could write. A few played fife and drum, and others simply listened to the crackle of the fire, exhausted. Elias cleaned his flintlock, watching sparks dance in the pit. Nearby, Lewis recorded observations: types of flora, river conditions, bird migrations. The natural world thrilled him—more than Elias could understand—but he respected the captain’s hunger to know it.

Clark made rounds among the men, checking on blisters, giving praise where it was due, and raising spirits with steady words. When he reached Elias, he squatted beside him and nodded toward the river.

“She’s a beast,” Clark said. “But we’ll learn her ways.”

Elias nodded. “I don’t fear her, Captain. But I don’t underestimate her either.”

“Good,” Clark replied, clapping his shoulder. “Men who think like that tend to make it through.”

From his bedroll, York—Clark’s enslaved servant and one of the few Black men among the Corps—muttered, “If the river don’t kill us, them mosquitoes will.”

That drew a round of laughter.

As the night deepened, Elias lay beneath his oilcloth, staring at the stars when clouds permitted. Somewhere ahead was a continent’s worth of unknowns. But for now, they had survived day one on the river.

And that was enough.

God Bless The USA

Sheila Tinkham

All my adult life I dreamed of traveling to Europe

The sights I would see

The people I would meet

Like Dorothy I now say, “There is no place like home.”

Give me the great outdoors, the cathedrals of the Grand Canyon
and the powerful vast waters of Niagara Falls.

Give me the stories of America from sea to shining sea.

The dreams of freedom and opportunity that has attracted
emigrants from around the world,

including Ireland where my mother was born and raised.

The dazzling lights of Las Vegas.

The beauty of Washington DC,

with its famous arcitecture and symbols of hope and amazing museums
like the Smithsonian... founded by a man rejected by his peers in England.

That is the story of America. You can create a new life, a new name, like

Gene Simmons from KISS who received a care package

with a sweater as a young boy in Israel and wore it in the heat because
someone on the other side of the world cared.

We care... and believe in God, in country, in family

So this August roast some s'mores, go to a baseball game, and relax...

and enjoy living in our wonderful country.

God bless the United States of America!

Taken from

Nebraska (A Poem)

by Alice A. Minick

Fair Nebraska, thy fame I see,
Thy thrift proclaimed from sea to sea,
Thy sons are heroes through thy name,
Who rise to height of useful fame.

Land of my youth, I love thee still,
With loyalty my soul doth thrill,
I strew my tributes at thy feet,
Of adoration and joy complete.

Land of my youth, I love thee still,
With loyalty my soul doth thrill,
Thy star of state doth brightly shine,
Nebraska dear, Nebraska mine.

Alice Ann (Lockwood) Minick was born in Geneva, New York in 1844. Her family moved to Nebraska in 1857, settling near Nemaha. She married Captain John S. Minick in January 1864 after a courtship that started as correspondence during the Civil War. In 1879 she reorganized the old Brownville Lyceum. She also became director of the Brownville Library Association, a collection of roughly 1,000 volumes housed in an old bank building. She was the first woman to earn a degree from the UN College of Law. Minick was the 14th woman admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court. She also published a novel, “One Family Travels West,” and was an avid writer of poetry. Alice lived for a time in the “Minick House” in Brownville, which she referred to as “Sunny Side.” Minick died in 1938 and is buried next to her husband in Brownville’s Walnut Grove Cemetery.

ARBOR CITY NEWS

Morton-James Public Library Calendar of Events August 2025

All activities held at Morton-James Public Library (unless otherwise noted), 923 1st Corso, Nebraska City, NE 68410
For questions call 402-873-5609 or visit morton-jamespubliclibrary.com

All Programming is Free and Open to the Public

Lego Club

Must be 8 years or older to join.

Monday, August 4

3:30PM-5:00PM

Story Time

Sing songs, learn some signs in American Sign Language and read some stories.

Story Times are geared toward children ages 2-6.

Wednesday, August 6

10:00AM

Yarn Crafters Club

Join us to work on your crocheting or knitting skills and projects.

Club is for all levels of crafters.

Bring your own hooks, yarn, needles, whatever you need to make your yarn craft.

Club members will be here to help those beginning.

Free to attend. Everyone welcome 15 and older!

Wednesday, August 6

1:30PM-3:00PM

Caricatures and Cornhole Party

Have your portrait drawn in a fun style! Play cornhole, eat, drink Shirley Temples and play games and try for a prize! FREE! Ages 19+. MUST REGISTER. Please

call 402-873-5609 to sign up for your slot!

Wednesday, August 6

6:00PM-7:30PM

The Art of Drumming and

Sounds of the Andean Mountains

Musician Oscar Rios is back by popular demand with a program aimed at youth and family participants. Journey through the music of the Andes and South

American countries.

Thursday, August 7 6:00PM

Romantasy Build-a-Dragon for Adults-An evening focusing on Romantasy (a blend of romance set in a fantasy world with magical elements). Learn about books in this genre, create a bookmark and build an adorable stuffed animal dragon! FREE! Ages 19+. MUST REGISTER. Please call 402-873-5609 to sign up.

Thursday, August 7

10:00AM

DAR American Revolution Exhibit Reception

Tuesday, August 12

10:00AM

Library Board Meeting

Wednesday, August 13

4:00PM

Writers Workshop

Join us to get feedback on your own writing and to learn more about the craft of writing! Attend in person or by zoom- call 402-873-5609 for info.

Saturday, August 16

10:00AM

Lego Club

Must be 8 years or older to join.

Monday, August 18

3:30-5:00PM

Day Book Club

A Lost Lady by Willa Cather

A representative from the Willa Cather Museum in Red Cloud, Nebraska will be our guest!

Afternoon Book Club meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 2:00 PM.

New members are always welcome!

Tuesday, August 19

2:00PM

Story Time

Sing songs, learn a few signs in American Sign Language and

read some stories. Story Times are geared toward children ages 2-6

Wednesday, August 20

10:00AM

Evening Book Club

The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue

by V.E. Schwab

Evening Book Club meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 5:30 PM.

New members are always welcome!

Wednesday, August 20

5:30PM

Chess Club

Every Thursday All ages welcome

4:00PM-6:00PM

American Revolution Experience Traveling Exhibit

presented by Otoe Chapter,

Daughters of the American Revolution and

The American Battlefield Trust

August 12-26, 2025 during regular Library hours

Exhibit features 12 panels highlighting thematic

connections between profiled individuals and

three interactive kiosks.

ARBOR CITY NEWS

News from Nebraska City

Heritage Guild News

Nancy Feeney

Featured Quilter Sara Velder Brings Talent and Whimsy to Heritage Needlework Guild's Applejack Show

This year's Quilt and Needlework Show will be in a new location . . . First Evangelical Lutheran Church, 315 S. 16th St., Nebraska City. This three-day show runs Friday, Sept. 19th, 4 to 7 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 20th, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, Sept. 21st, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Considered one of the best quilt and needlework shows in southeast Nebraska, people flock to this show to view over 100 member-made quilts and other needlework items on display. There is also a special display of dozens of quilts created by this year's Featured Quilter Sara Velder, from Elmwood, NE. Since Halloween is one of Sara's favorite holidays, she will add her own 'spooky' vibe to this year's show. Over the years, Sara has made scores of Halloween-themed quilts, which will be a welcome sight with October just around the corner from the Applejack Festival in Nebraska City.

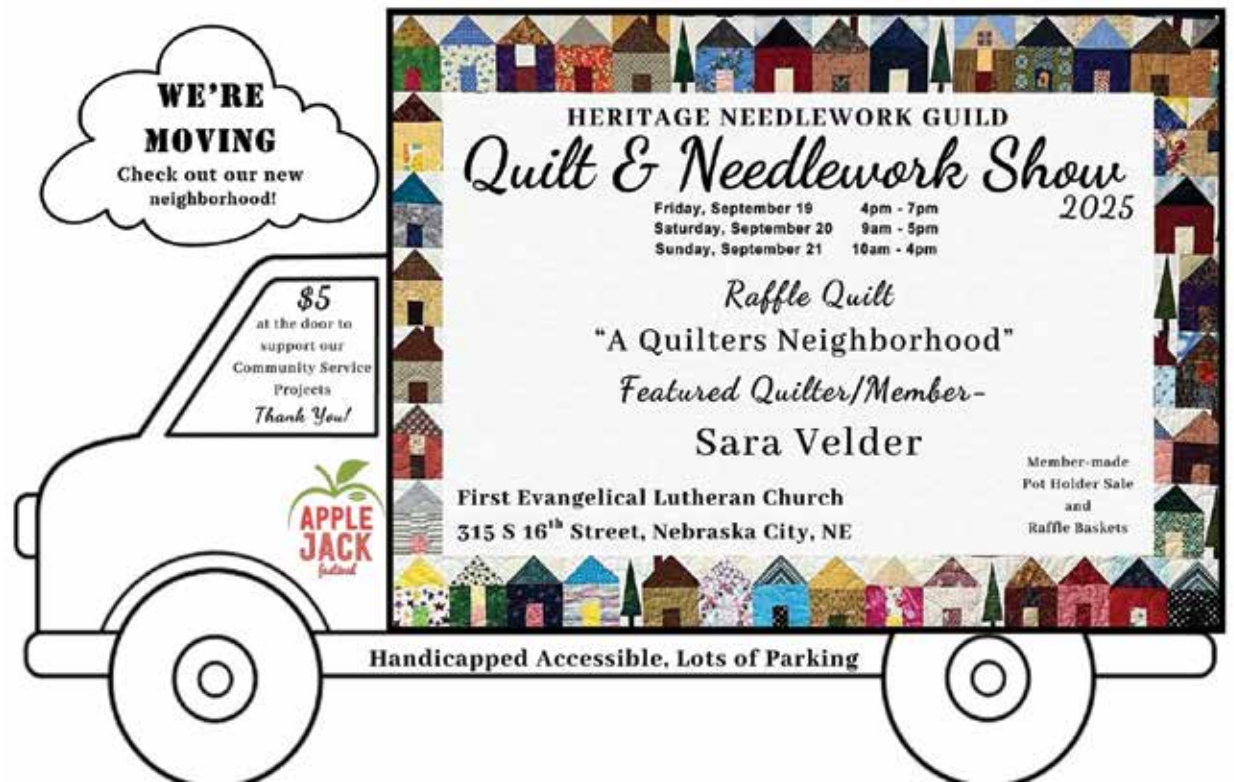
In 2006, Sara started her own longarm quilting business, Acorn Ridge Quilting. Using her computerized longarm machine, Sara puts the beautiful finishing touches on her many customers' quilts. "It's a joy to see all the beautiful quilts my customers bring to me."

This year's Raffle Quilt is called "A Quilters Neighborhood." When you look at these 225 individual houses on this 82 x 104-inch quilt, you might see your own neighborhood on display. Guild members gathered to stitch these houses into rows for the quilt, just like neighbors getting together to make their community more beautiful. The raffle quilt was eventually finished and quilted by Guild members Anna Sasse and Shelly Clark.

The extremely popular Raffle Baskets are back again this year. These baskets are created by Guild members and contain a variety of items and sewing goodies based on varied themes, such as Baby, Christmas, Huskers, etc. Tickets for all raffles are \$1 each or 7 tickets for \$5. Entry fee for this show is \$5 at the door, which is used to support the Guild's community service projects.



Last year's Heritage Needlework Guild's Applejack Show.



Heritage Needlework Guild's "Quilt and Needlework Show"

Moves to a New Location

Nancy Feeney, Nebraska City



There's a Summer Place...

ARBOR CITY NEWS

News from Nebraska City

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This musical artist kicked off the TreeStock event in Steinhart Park.



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Amy Oswalt, Baker

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Facebook Page: Adeline's Bakery

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There were a number of stunts and riders at the BMX event.

The Ghost of Wildwood House
by a wandering neighbor

Tucked among the stately trees of Nebraska City, the Wildwood House seems like the kind of place where time politely lingers. Built in 1869 by a local businessman and Civil War veteran, this Italianate-style home still stands with its tall windows, bracketed eaves, and a porch that has weathered generations. But if the whispers are true, it has also weathered visitors who never truly left.

Wildwood is now a historic house museum, its rooms dressed in Victorian fashion — oil lamps, fainting couches, lace curtains. On calm afternoons, volunteers will tell you about its architecture or the lives of its former occupants. But locals sometimes speak more softly of the other things seen and heard; the rustle of a skirt with no one in the hall, footsteps overhead when the rooms are empty, and the persistent smell of lavender in an upstairs bedroom.

One former staff member told of setting up for an Autumn event and hearing a woman humming in the parlor. When she turned to speak, there was no one there. Another, locking up after hours, claimed the rocking chair in the east bedroom continued to sway gently after she entered — as though someone had just stood up.

No one has ever claimed the Wildwood spirit is unfriendly. She seems more curious than anything — perhaps watching over the old place, making sure no detail is forgotten, no corner unloved.

If you visit Wildwood this summer, pause on the threshold. You may hear only the chirp of cicadas or the wind in the trees — or perhaps the quiet creak of history that never fully rests.



The Wildwood House Museum

Visit the Wildwood Historic Center

Located at 420 Steinhart Park Road in Nebraska City
Wildwood is open for guided tours May through September.
Step back into the Victorian era with rooms preserved in 19th-century style — and maybe catch a whisper of the past.
For hours, events, or group tours, call (402) 873-6340 or visit wildwoodhistoriccenter.org.

I've spoken to a few of the volunteer tour guides, and although they acknowledge the folklore, they are united in the notion that the Wildwood House is **not** haunted. Maybe go check it out for yourself. Email me if you feel, hear, or see a "presence."




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by Devon Adams, Nebraska City

A BOOK OF STONE

Layers of years look like a book with stone pages, when you peel off the topsoil. Along the river bluffs, you can read the past in layers of limestone and sandstone with words spelled out in fossils. The land lies low here, down to the bottom of the old inland sea. It wasn't heaved and tilted like the mountains, jumbled and tumbled in heaps, like puzzle pieces thrown in a pile. When you walk the Steamboat Trace Trail, you are looking at OLD rocks.

FIELDS OF CLOVER

Under the humid sun of summer, there is a faint buzz of bees being busy collecting pollen. They are not alone. Down among the stalks and stems and blooms are other little bodies that seek the sweet gold of life. But floating in the fragrant air are creatures so beautiful beyond belief that they seem like fragments of imagination. Butterflies are impractical illusions, surviving and thriving in wind and rain, traveling countless miles on wings so thin and soft that their survival seems whimsical.

THE RAIN DRAIN

The drought-racked land is thirsty past the point of life. The growing season is racing for the frost line and if more moisture doesn't come before winter, snow will have to fall in feet instead of inches. Storms are making lots of noise and drowning things here and there, but that water is all flash and doesn't stay and soak. How big does a rain dance have to be to raise the water table top? We can ask, but would there be an answer?

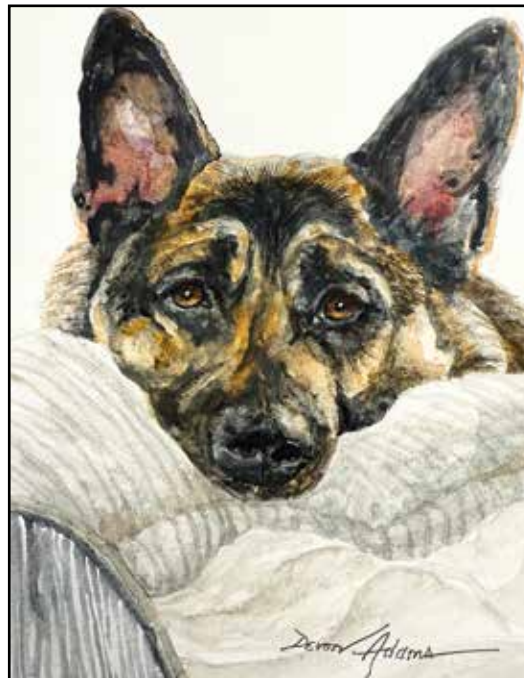
OLD NEWS

The paper was mellow with age, yellowing from years in a drawer, and sad from being forgotten. Names on the pages, with details of the stages of their lives described inside, were gone now. Some of the families died out or moved far away. But some of the "Babies Born" in the "This Week" column are still alive. And they can remember the way things were. And the old paper was glad to see them as they opened the pages and read all the old news.

SUMMER LEAVES

In the dark of the night, moon shadows fall on yards still lush from rains that dropped out of the thunderheads that rose into massive mountains of moisture. But soon, Autumn will blow her dry breath across the prairie, and greens will fade to the crackled tans and browns of dead growth. Trees with fancy clothes will see them blaze with color before they fall, leaving harsh bare branches sighing in the changing winds.

By Artist, Devon Adams
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adamsdevon07@gmail.com 402-209-9377



Monarch on Milkweed -- Photo by Devon Adams

Family Reunion

Bruce Madsen

I wrote this prayer for a cousin reunion our family had a few years ago. It can fit anybody’s family. Just change the countries your ancestors came from to fit yours, and insert your own family names, then you’re good to go.

Our Father in Heaven.....

So from (insert your own countries) the places our ancestors came from, the people you see here today are the continuation
Of the (----- and -----) family bloodline.
We’ve all led our lives differently, taking many different roads
That has led us here to this hill, this church, this day.

We are, Pharmacist and Farmers
Diplomats and Teachers
Artists and Doctors
Healthcare givers and Community leaders
Leaders of large organizations
Social workers and Scientist
Musicians and Housewives

This is us, our contribution, whether it was large or small makes little difference. Our impact hopefully made the world a better place. Something previous generations could be proud of and future generations can be proud of too.

So lets feel blessed and give thanks for what we have been able to accomplish during our lives and hope we can continue our good fortune.

And help us to remember the ones that can’t be here today, those that have gone before us. Help us to remember the good memories while they were here on this earth but also the sadness we felt when they left.

May God bless us all and continue to bless us the rest of our lives.

Thank you for this day, this good time, and may the memory we share today stay with us forever.

Amen

Your Country Neighbor
Your “2-cups-of-coffee” companion
including local photos and articles
with the flavor of rural America.

Share this publication with friends.
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yourcountryneighbor.com

Window On Fifth Street

Stephen Hassler, Peru

My window on Fifth Street has shown me many thunderstorms. In August, thunderheads swell beyond the hills and blur the horizon, as if an old storm were returning. The air grows too still, too eerie. And then a late summer storm begins to stir, carrying the sharp scent of wet dust.

First, the birds get quiet. Then the sky darkens, clouds roll and seem to boil. A distant rumble, a lightening flash or two, and suddenly we're under a tornado watch.

It’s the kind of storm that surprises the senses with flashes and crashes and the shaking of windows. Folks glance up from what they’re doing, watching the southwestern sky, checking the radar, securing the porch chairs, and hoping they don’t hear the siren. It’s part of the season, part of living here; August’s violence and heat both arriving at once.

And then, the clouds open to spill droplets, then sheets of rain across the rooftops, turning street curbs into rushing streams.

After the downpour, there’s a pause, not complete silence, as the town takes a breath. The storm has passed, but it leaves some things behind; cooler air, and a shift in mood. We’re left standing in the stillness, thinking of other storms.

Routines pick back up. Someone’s dog comes out from under the porch and barks. The air is humid and clammy. Inside, the A/C hums, and someone leans over the sink, gazing out a kitchen window at the clean, glistening foliage of oak and maple trees and maybe a small, fallen branch or two in the yard.

I’ve known Summers when rain storms never came, just wind and wet dust, leaving mud on the windshield. When the ground cracked and curled up on itself as in a dry creek bed. And other times when the rain poured for hours, saturating the soil until it could hold no more, and flash floods washed across roads and bridges. The weather has a way of reminding us that nothing is promised, everything must be worked for, and rewards take time.

The light this time of year has a certain slant, a kind of amber resignation that says August won’t last. The garden knows it. The birds know it. We do too, even as we want to hold on to the waning days of Summer.

But the longing for early Summer dawns, warm intimate evenings, and festive weekends, gives way to the reality of the seasons, concurrent with the cycle of hopeful living and hard answers. But the law of life’s cycle guarantees that in the cold of Winter, the realization of “this too, shall pass” becomes a promise, even a comfort. And so we can expect light to return and green to rise again from the frozen earth.

But today is August. Green is here right now, and so is early morning sunshine. We would be foolish not to grasp late evening sunsets as we would the hand of a loved one, while knowing that the passing of a sunset gives way to a new dawn, a new day, and more of the gift of life.



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| New 2024 GMC Terrain SLE | |
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