



Tanksley Scores 38 Points!
PSC v Central Methodist Univ.



Snow Geese at Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge 11/13/20

A Magazine from Small Towns & Rural America

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



Cases “tested positive” for Covid-19 in our “Country Neighborhood.”

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

Date	Nemaha	Otoe	Johnson	Richardson
November 7	218	433	145	175
November 14	245	522	238	223
November 21	276	663	300	290
November 28	296	727	306	344

Southeast Nebraska counties increased in Covid-19 cases through the month of November. December results, if available, will be presented here next month.

Inside

Covid-19 Cases in Southeast Nebraska.....	1
Covid-19 Cases in Our ‘4-Corners’ Area.....	2
“My Favorite Things Of Christmas”.....	2
Autumn Photography.....	1,3,4,5,8,11
Snow Geese.....	1,4,5,11
Devon’s Poetry.....	6 & 7
Merri’s “Diary of a Part-time Housewife”.....	10
Janet’s “Waiting For Snow”.....	11
Janet’s “Without A Phone”.....	12
“Window On Fifth Street”.....	12
 PSC Basketball Photography.....	13 & 14
PSC News.....	15
“Success Awards” At Peru State!.....	16
 Valentino’s Coupon!!.....	16

Your Country Neighbor

Voices and Views From the Valleys of the Nemaha

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

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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

December Writers & Contributors

Devon Adams - 6 & 7

Stephen Hassler - 12

Merri Johnson - 10

Dorothy Rieke - 2

Janet Sobczyk - 11 & 12

Thank You!

Covid Cases In Counties Bordering Nebraska

(Same Source As Table On Page 1)

Date	Kansas		Missouri		Iowa
	Brown	Nemaha	Atchison	Holt	
November 7	332	500	106	163	253
November 14	450	704	132	181	273
November 21	606	873	180	226	334
November 28	725	1012	207	261	355

My Favorite Things Of Christmas

by Dorothy Rieke, Julian

Recently, much has been written about favorite things. Favorite things for women generally refer to a pretty beaded purse, a special necklace, or even a pair of expensive shoes. Men might favor a certain necktie, a pair of comfortable sports shoes, or a car.

In other words, favorite means preferred or best-liked. It may mean things considered dear or beloved. During each holiday season, we celebrate with those who are special and things that hold memories. In turn, besides our loved ones, certain things and practices make our holidays memorable and exceptional, even extraordinary.

The following are favorite things that are especially enjoyed during the Christmas season:

1 Family. Appreciation of family often becomes more evident during holiday seasons. Closer contact with speaking and interacting brings a new sense of the importance of Mother, Dad, grandparents and children in our lives.

2 Friends. Meeting with friends renews friendships and brings a sense of how special friends are and how important they are in our lives.

3 Being thankful and appreciative creates new perspectives and different outlooks. These qualities establish happiness and contentment.

4 Beautiful snow scenes on Christmas cards and in real life situations often delight with the beauty and splendor of nature. Each card represents a personal messenger that delights and surprises with its beauty and message.

5 Thinking of others and sharing at their particular time fits with the reason for the season. Acts of charity bring happiness and a sense of well being.

6 Children play a role in this holiday's celebration. Their enthusiasm, excitement, and eagerness inspire us all to join in this celebration.

7 Sounds of bells and inspiring Christmas music set the stage for Christmas customs and celebrations.

8 The quiet times bring time for reflection and contemplation. This is a time for taking stock of our lives and thinking about setting new goals for accomplishment. It is also a time for memories to surface of times past and of those who loved and cared during earlier holidays.

9 The thoughtfulness of loved ones during the holidays. Small gifts, a helping hand, a friendly smile, all serve to enhance our own lives.

The magical, intriguing spirit of Christmas includes family gatherings, gifts, carols, programs and more. They are the true favorite things of the Christmas season. These form an enchanting mist that surrounds one bringing joy and a renewed sense of caring.

Favorite things bring a season in all its glory and beauty to celebrate one of the greatest gifts ever given.



Blue Jay, November 19, 2020



The Monarch's favorite 'flower' produces this silky burst of seed.
The Monarch's larvae depend on the milkweed for food.



The second full moon in a calendar month is called a "Blue Moon." It only occurs "once in a blue moon."
This one, October 31st, 2020.

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COVID-19 is spreading in Nebraska
Here's what you can do to stay safe and stop the spread:


Avoid the Three Cs

1. Crowded Places




Avoid gathering in groups where you can't maintain 6-feet distance from others.

2. Close Contact




Wear a mask or **maintain** 6-feet distance when you're with people you don't live with.

3. Confined Spaces

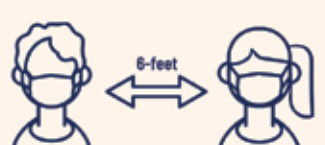


Avoid enclosed spaces with poor ventilation.


AT WORK, AT SCHOOL, AT SMALL AND LARGE GATHERINGS, AND EVERYWHERE YOU GO
WHEN YOU SPEND MORE THAN 15 MINUTES WITH OTHER PEOPLE ...



Avoid crowded places and limit time in enclosed spaces.



Wear a mask over your nose and mouth or maintain 6-feet distance from people you don't live with.



Wash your hands often.

Version - October 15, 2020

Find your local health department at www.nalhd.org

NALHD
Nebraska Association of Local Health Directors



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The trees behind these Geese often have Bald Eagles 'watching.'
The website gives the Bald Eagle count too. Google; Loess Bluffs Waterfowl Counts.



The Nuthatch is interesting to watch. Except when flying, he performs upside down.



The Nuthatch opens the sunflower seed by jamming it in the tree bark and pecking at it.



The Titmouse and Nuthatch are often in each other's company, and also with the Chickadee.

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There were 150,000 to 200,000 snow geese at the refuge November 13th.

Merry
Christmas



Drive Safely

This Holiday Season

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QUIET

It was a very silent house that night, and also very dark, except for super silver moon light falling on the floor through frosted window panes. Mom and Dad were sleeping deep inside their dreams, but the kids were waking every hour to watch the clock. At six a.m. Christmas would happen under the magic tree. One by one they tip-toed to the window to look and listen for the old man landing in their yard with his sleigh. Instead, they saw a sight that seemed to be impossible to be. It was a herd of deer all tied together with a twist of bittersweet, prancing and stamping their hooves. They kicked up snow in sparkly clouds that caught the moon and threw it back. Then a little man appeared beside the team and leaped up on the back of a buck with antlers hung with bells that jingled. And then they vanished, like a dream that never ever happened!

HIGH BLUE

Freezing wind sweeps the prairie and wraps around the angles and corners of houses, barns and machine sheds, not to mention the power lines that moan and sing their sad prayers for warmth. The sky is a satin blue ceiling, impossibly high and remote in the cold. An infinite distance reaches past the horizon, up into the Canadian bowl of winter that keeps spilling it's frigid snow porridge south over the unprotected sweep of land that spreads like a table top between the mountains. Living beings move stiffly in their daily chores and routines, waiting for the sun to change it's mind and roll back across the sky into Spring.

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CRYSTAL CATHEDRAL

There was a
diamond tunnel
where the street
had been the
day before.
Big old trees
were leaning in
and down, finger
branches touching
at the tip of the
top of the arch.
Power was out
from broken lines,
and folks were
home on Sunday.
But when they
walked out in
the street they
saw that church
was not so far
away. In the glaze
and glitter, they
were standing in
a crystal cathedral
created by the
master builder.

BARE BONES

Now the wraps are off
and the land can't lie
about it's skeleton.
The old stone that
was laid down at the
bottom of an ancient
sea is visible as sheer
walls at the edge of
the river valley that has
been carved by a water
knife for more years
than there are grains
of glass in the sand
bars. Severe edges
define the trees in the
timber. Like black ink
lines, the bends and
curves of branches
touch each other in
a spooky wind dance
of frigid air. Colors are
only a memory on the
winter palette, except
for electric blue shadows
on the snow.

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ABC's

Mom was making
pies, and had some
extra dough, so she
rolled it out all flat
and fine, and opened
up the cupboard door.
The top shelf held
the jar that had the lid
that popped off like a
shot. Inside were letters
made for cutting dough
that could spell out
words if little fingers
got them right. But
even if the words
weren't real, the taste
was yummy and felt
really good inside a
happy little tummy.

CHRISTMAS CACTUS

One of those
Christmas angels
must have visited
this week, because
the dull green
arching stems of
my little plant
have just exploded
with rocket red
flowers that are
wearing ruffled
skirts with fancy
dangles that
glimmer in the
sunny window.
Every day new
buds are growing
into bursts of
color on this
tropical "tree!"



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(S) '17 JD X390, 117 hrs, 54" deck, pwr deck lift, pwr steering.....	\$4,480
(S) '13 JD 997, commercial zero turn, diesel, 72" deck, 2530 hrs.....	\$7,800
(S) '14 JD Z930R, 1094.5 hrs, 54" MOD deck, sus seat.....	\$6,200

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Canada Geese at Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge 11/13/20

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1301 19th St., Auburn \$229,900
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508 Nebraska St., Peru \$65,000
Three 2 bedroom apartments, with potential for 4th apartment. Fully occupied at present.



208 California St., Peru \$175,000
2 bedrms upstairs, Master suite w/ jetted tub & corner shower. Bs-mnt 90% finished w/fam room.



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1100 Central Avenue \$130,000
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1213 3rd St., Peru \$45,000
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Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson, Auburn

It's November 20, about 3:45 p.m. It has been another lovely fall day, though the clouds are moving in now, signaling the end to this run of unseasonably warm days.

I was just outside enjoying my hammock chair by the pond one more time. My twirling chair brought a flock of cedar wax wings into view, high in the bare branches of the ash and hackberry trees in the southwest corner of our woodland. They like to gather in the tree tops to catch the late afternoon sun. Naturally, I did not have my binoculars with me. I could still identify them, but I would have enjoyed them much more with a closer look.

Bird activity around our house indicates that they know a change is coming. Cardinals have been at the bath and feeder today. A pair of red-breasted nuthatches have been frequent, recent visitors to the suet feeders, along with other woodpecker types. The juncos are here and the robins are mostly gone. Our neighborhood Cooper's hawk is also on the hunt. I hate to think of the song birds falling prey, but I can't begrudge the hawk.

Hubby and I would normally have been taking advantage of this season to hike at Indian Cave State Park. But he is on a forced hiatus from straining his back, doctor's orders. A long-standing pain finally led him to a back specialist who prescribed a brace and no lifting, twisting, etc., NOT EVEN GOLF, for six weeks. You may think what's the big deal about no golf this time of year? Trust me, the calendar means nothing to a golfer. If the course is not covered with snow and the temperature is above 50 degrees, golf is on the agenda. I hope we don't get any major snowfall anytime soon or yours truly will be doing all the scooping.

Walks around the neighborhood suffice for exercise for the time being. But we did put an Aerotrainer inflatable exercise thingee on our Christmas list. If we decide we don't like it, at least it can be deflated and not take up space for no good reason, like the treadmill in the basement!

So far, Hubby has been obeying the doctor's orders fairly well. He is quick to remind me of his limitations when I suggest a project that might tax his back just a tad. On the other hand, I find that I need to remind him to put his brace on in the morning when I see it still lying neglected on a living room chair at 9:30 a.m.

I do have a project for him that won't require lifting. The oodles of photos on our computer and smart phones need to be scrutinized and selected for printing. I will have to participate in the selection process, but Hubby will get the task of sending them off to Shutterfly for printing and then deleting them. He's much better at the technology side of things than I am.

Since wearing his back brace is not at all comfortable while driving, it is a good thing we had already decided not to make our two usual road trips to Texas and Arizona this winter. I am perfectly fine with hunkering down this year. Staying in more, curling up with a good book, sketching, writing, doing more yoga: it's all good. We will take our cues from nature and follow the fallow way for a few months. Spring will come again, and we'll be rested up and eager to rejoin the active life.

Until next time, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a long winter's nap.

Waiting For Snow

Janet Sobczyk, © 2020, Omaha

Childhood

The days pass
like slow motion, playing tag outside
losing my tooth
wondering what first grade's like.

The weeks pass
as Thanksgiving brings relatives home
holding my doll
feeling excitement and joy.

The hours pass
as bedtime approaches on Christmas Eve
watching the news
hoping Santa will make it.

The night passes
as icy rain precedes swirling flakes
coating the trees
making them look magical.

The storm passes
as I peek under the tree... he came!
melting my fear
erasing my doubts for good.

Adulthood

The days pass
like a breeze blowing pages of a book
losing my place
wondering where summer went.

The weeks pass
as autumn nears the brink of winter
holding my breath
feeling the chill in my bones.

The hours pass
as forecasters predict a blizzard
watching the news
hoping it misses our town.

The night passes
as icy rain precedes swirling flakes
coating my trees
making all the roads deadly.

The storm passes
as daylight returns, sun's glow warms the land
melting the drive
erasing the fears of night.



If the water at the Refuge is not frozen over, then December, January, and February are the best times to see the Snow Geese at Loess Bluffs Wildlife Refuge east of Rulo. I visit when “counts” are over 100,000. Google; Loess Bluffs Waterfowl Counts.

Without a Phone

Janet Sobczyk, Omaha, © 2020

As I backed my car out of the driveway, I realized my cell phone was left charging on the kitchen counter. I stopped, preparing to dash in for it. Then paused, thinking “Why? I can go shopping without it.”

Confidently, I continued to back up. Then, braked.

The “what-if’s” took over my mind. What if I get in an accident? What if I see an item that I want to ask my friend’s opinion about? (It’s fun and helpful to take her shopping via photo texts.) What if I’m running late to pick up my daughter from school? What if, what if, what if!!

Impetuously, I brushed aside the doubts and left without my phone. Some would call that foolish. I call it a flashback to the 80’s.

On the drive to the store my mind wandered back in time. Before cells, I’d head out the door with less expectation that something would go wrong. I had less fear of distracted drivers. I noticed acquaintances at the store that I now miss while checking my screen for texts. I spent more time in face-to-face interaction with actual conversation, not just cute tweets.

Back then my watch informed the time, and didn’t make noises to grab attention. I could lose track of time and be more fully in the moment. I took in more of the world around me.

I smiled thinking back to those “good old days” when we had it made with modern conveniences and a little bit of technology. It was cool to have electric curling irons that enabled those big hairstyles, and we weren’t yet obsessed with selfies. Capturing moments on film or Polaroids seemed good enough.

I parked near the shopping carts and grabbed one on my way into the store, thinking about how the way we pay has changed so much. Writing checks and carrying cash used to be common. Now all we need is a card to shop in person or online. Good thing I had my wallet in my purse and didn’t need my phone to pay. Some people now have phone apps to pay, but I don’t. That’s where I draw the line (for now).

Walking into the store I reached for the sale flyer, flipped through it quickly and realized there wasn’t even one coupon to clip. And this store has discontinued their “rewards card” program which gave the sale prices. A mini rewards card dangled uselessly on my keyring. I looked up thinking, “The sales probably ring up automatically at the register.” Then I spied the kiosk near the entrance. Scan these specials with your phone to get our great deals today!

I turned on a dime and headed home for my phone.

Window On Fifth Street

Stephen Hassler, Peru

What if there exists a window that provides a different view to each of two people side-by-side, looking through it?

When I visit with my sister about events of long ago, we sometimes disagree as to what and/or when some event happened. For example, we remember a family vacation to Washington D.C. decades ago, but as to when, our memories are conflicted.

At my last high school reunion I recognized a guy I had not seen in 55 years. He did not remember me. Not only didn’t he recognize me, he didn’t remember a hunting trip we were on together, or the 4-H basketball league we were in, events which are vivid in my memory. Well, I thought, he is old, and maybe I was expecting too much of him.

Lately I have become aware of a similar conflict between myself and another person regarding an event at which we were both present, but I have no recollection.

Thus brings to my mind a theory I’ve read about, that says we exist in a universe parallel to many other universes, all of which are nearly identical except for a relatively few “events” which are just a little different from one existence to another.

I thought of this theory because as weird as it sounds, it suggests that one can slip from one side-by-side universe into another because the boundaries are so “fluid,” or overlapping. I knew someone who used to say, when she misplaced an item like a pen and then found it again in about the same spot, “I must have changed universes.”

Over time, 55 years after last seeing my schoolmate, one or both of us might have “changed universes” frequently enough or drifted among more than just the side-by-side ones, that we didn’t have the exact same past any more.

Please don’t freak out. I’m just musing here. Besides, does anyone know what reality is anyway? Does the “theory of everything” have to only describe the objectively real world? Or can it be extended to include what is “outside?” For example, is heaven in this universe or outside it?

The next time you think you observe reality differently than you might expect, ask yourself if both cases might be real. You might have just opened a window to another universe.

For you nerds out there, you can dig deeper into this by reading about or googling the “*Many-Worlds Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics*.” Covid-19 isn’t the only thing that can blow your mind.



PSC Men's Basketball

Nov 7 PSC v Avila 72-75 OT & Nov 18 PSC v Central Methodist 71-78





PSC Women's Basketball

PSC v Hastings College 89-65 & PSC v Graceland University 74-58



Peru State College News

Peru State Now Accepting Applications For The Corrections Leadership Scholarship

The new Corrections Leadership Scholarship at Peru State College is now accepting applications for the Spring 2021 and Fall 2021 semesters. The \$15,000 (per year) scholarship is the result of a one-of-a-kind collaboration between the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services and Peru State College intended to address the unique workforce challenges at the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution (TSCI).

Dr. Tim Borchers, vice president of academic affairs, writes, “The scholarship represents our commitment to recruiting the best and brightest to work in corrections and study criminal justice.”

“This first of its kind program will help both Nebraska and our nation reshape how it thinks about service and careers in corrections.”

Nebraska Department of Correctional Services Director, Scott Frakes, said earlier this year, “NDCS is excited to join Peru State in this innovative, unique approach to long term, high-quality leadership development.”

“Corrections is an ever-evolving business, and we need people who have the skills and education needed to lead this agency through the decades ahead. This forward-thinking initiative by the Governor and the Legislature is just one more example of why Nebraska is a national leader in business development. We are willing to invest in people.”

The Corrections Leadership Scholarship Program provides scholarships to Peru State Criminal Justice students who are completing a degree while working at the TSCI during the school year and summer. The goal of the program is to develop students to become leaders as employees in the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services.

Peru State students accepted into the program will receive \$12,500 per academic year, which will be divided equally between the fall and spring terms and applied to the students’ accounts. There is an additional \$2,500 housing allowance available for the summer, in addition to pay received for hours worked at TSCI.

Applicants must:

Be 18 years of age or older or reach 18 years of age prior to beginning employment at TSCI.

Have a valid driver’s license.

Complete an application to Peru State College, complete an application for the Corrections Leadership Scholarship Program, enroll at Peru State College and declare a major in Criminal Justice.

Currently attend or be a graduate of an accredited senior high school or received an equivalent of a high school diploma.

Pass a criminal background check conducted by the Nebraska Department of Corrections, the Corrections Office Behavioral Assessment, pre-employment medical exam and a drug test.

Student-athletes and fully online students are not eligible for the program.

Interested students may visit www.peru.edu/corrections to learn more about the program and apply. Applications are open for January 2021 and August 2021.

Peru State College Commencement Saturday, December 12

Peru State College will hold a commencement ceremony on Saturday, December 12, in the Al Wheeler Activity Center. Due to health precautions, the ceremonies will be invitation only, and split into 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. events.

Jason Hogue, director of marketing and communication, writes, “The College surveyed graduates about how to best hold the planned December commencement. An overwhelming majority asked for an on-campus ceremony.”

The College previously cancelled its spring commencement due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The December commencement ceremony was announced in March.

Peru State College graduates from August 2019, December 2019, May 2020, August 2020 and December 2020 have been invited to participate. Each student may invite up to four guests to attend through the College’s ticketing program.

Hogue adds, “Working closely with Southeast District Health Department and our other health partners, the College believes it can host a safe and healthy commencement ceremony.”

New Directed Health Measures from the State of Nebraska requiring only 25% occupancy of facilities will not affect the College’s plans. The ceremony was already planned conservatively with less than 25% of the Al Wheel Activity Center’s total occupancy.

The original December commencement was slated December 18. The student survey found that December 12 was a better date.

Shuttle service from campus parking lots will be available. For details about parking and other logistics, please visit <https://www.peru.edu/commencement>.

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CAREER SCHOLARSHIP
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\$10,000 (\$2,500/yr)

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\$7,000 (\$1,750/yr)

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NEBRASKA CAREER
SCHOLARSHIPS

The State of Nebraska is calling all future Business, Education, Criminal Justice and Computer majors! The Nebraska Career Scholarships have limited availability, so don't miss the first award deadline, December 1.

AWARD REQUIREMENTS:

- ♦ Majoring in Business, Education, Criminal Justice or Computer Management Information Systems.
- ♦ Score of 18 or above on the ACT.
- ♦ Completed free Peru State College admission application and personal statement.

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR SCHOLARSHIPS AT:
WWW.PERU.EDU/ADMISSIONS/COST-AID

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