



The Trumpeter Swan bird count on December 10, 2024 was 3741 at the Loess Bluffs Wildlife Refuge between Rulo, Nebraska and Mound City, Missouri.

Immature Bald Eagle soaring over the Refuge, 12/22/2024

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



December was a good month for viewing Bald Eagles and Trumpeter Swans at the Loess Bluffs Wildlife Refuge. This image was taken on December 6, 2024.

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“Your Country Neighbor” is delivered to the following communities in Southeast Nebraska & NW Missouri.

Auburn • Brownville • Cook • Falls City • Johnson • Julian • Nebraska City

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Your Country Neighbor

Voices and Views from the Valleys of the Nemaha

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

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This Month's Writers & Contributors

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Thank You!

Jubilant January!

A Message from your Publisher

Stephen Hassler, Peru, Nebraska

January! Expect cold. Plan to keep warm! Don't be surprised by snow or ice. Make sure your antifreeze is effective. Anticipate the Superbowl next month. Enjoy watching your favorite NFL team; Broncos, Chiefs, Vikings, or maybe Chicago or Green Bay. What about the NBA? And there's “March Madness” to look forward to.

This month's photography is mostly December wildlife at the Refuge with the usual action shots of PSC sports. Some of the eagles and swans in this issue were shot with my new camera. I hope you perceive them to be sharper, more focused images. This camera is supposed to find the eye and focus on it. See what you think. I anticipate more wildlife photos in February if the marsh doesn't freeze over and I get more visitors to my bird feeder.

Now pour a second cup of coffee and peruse this issue of “Your Country Neighbor” with it's magazine articles and poetry, rural community news and festivals, and regional photos of wildlife, landscapes and college sports.

Do you still get seed catalogs in the mail? If not, you could search online. I recommend “Jackson & Perkins.” No seeds, but garden décor, perennials and amazing roses.

The days are getting lighter! Soon I will notice the late afternoon light lingering longer. Happiness is sunshine and Springtime. More exactly, perfect happiness is having someone to love, something to do, and something to look forward to. Something to remember in the new year.

Clip the **Valentino's coupon** on page 10 and **carry it with you!**

Happy New Year! And if you travel, drive safely!

Here is a quote from one of my newsletters.

“We may look different, we may have different beliefs, but we all have souls. There is no difference between a Muslim soul and a Christian soul. If we could see each other's souls, we would not be killing each other over different interpretations of God.”

“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 forget 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

PSC v Park Univeersity
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The Bald Eagle's plumage is white and dark brown, not black.

PSC v Grand View University

Win 73 - 64

Dec 4, 2024



All photos of Bald Eagles in this issue were taken this December at the Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge, but watch for them soaring above your neighborhood, too.

4 January 2025 Your Country Neighbor





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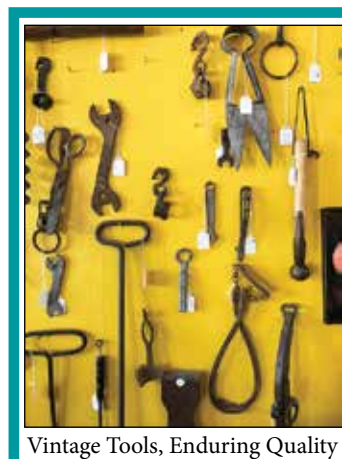
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It’s amazing to see the Trumpeter Swans in so many “flying poses” this season, especially December 22, 2024, a very good day at the refuge.



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Gary Adams Wins Quilt Raffle

Marty Peregoy

Gary Adams of Auburn who grew up in Peru won the quilt raffle December 8th. Gary's mom, Phyllis, was an amazing quilter. I like to think that she's smiling about his win.

Although I have thanked lots of people on Facebook, I realize that many don't have the opportunity to view that page, so I'd like to double down on my thanks to them here:

To Western National Bank, Shirley and Josie, who ok'd the idea of a Rob Walker Memorial Christmas Tree, allowed us to plant it in the lot south of the bank, gave us permission to decorate, sold raffle tickets, and provided amazing treats for the kids.

To Northridge Church, for letting us use their building when City Hall was not available.

To Cate Wyckoff, her daughter Kira and friend Trevor, who moved tables, helped kids, and contributed to ornament making; PSC students Bernice, Waylon and Kellen, who interacted with kids and gave up part of their last day before finals week; Kelly Adams, who had endless ideas for pallet art and decorating and the energy to turn all her ideas into fun projects for me and for kids; Amber Schutte-Barnett for being the on-the-spot artist, helper and tool supplier next door during decorating; Brandi Hull, for capturing the moments with Santa, and Stephen Hassler for playing the guitar as we sang around the tree for the first of many times to come.

To Santa, who made everyone smile as he listened to kids' wish lists and then repeated the list in case any adults wanted to know what was on it; and to the Peru Volunteer Fire Department - Miranda, Barb, Brent and others who transported Santa and lots of goody bags to the gazebo.

To PCIG, including Stephen, Miranda, Julie, Rachel and Vanessa, who gave me permission to run a raffle and raise funds for the community tree, and who offered their support when this all got underway last April.

To Patsy Fike, the amazing quilter and embroiderer, whose 48 beautiful blocks became our fundraising quilt; Connie at Needles I, who did the long-arm quilting; Peru's Sew Sisters (Barb, Kathy, Cheryl, Cate and Joanna), who provided fabric, batting, backing, and labor - turning the blocks into a queen-sized quilt; and all those who purchased one thousand tickets. We couldn't have done it without you!

To Campbells's Nursery in Shenandoah, who helped me select the perfect tree for our needs, and

To The families and children of Peru, who helped us continue the tradition of having a party the second Sunday in December, and started the new tradition of a real, live tree. As someone said that night, "Rob Walker would have loved it."

By the time you read this, the Facebook page will have been retired till next year. If you didn't happen to get your Santa photos downloaded before the page disappeared, they have been posted by PCIG as well.

If you have any suggestions to make the Peru Community Christmas more fun for adults and kids alike, please let me know. I have a few ideas already for making the time with children more manageable but still fun. And next year we can look forward to being back in City Hall, as it has already been reserved.

The "Rob Walker Memorial Christmas Tree"



Small town Peru has a newly planted "Christmas" tree, funded by a very successful quilt raffle. Both tree and town are expected to grow in the coming years. See details in Marty's 'Quilt' article on this page.

Share this publication with friends.
It's online at;

<http://www.yourcountryneighbor.com>

PERU CITY NEWS

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Thank you to everyone who participates!



Let's Talk Education

John Chatelain, Omaha

My parents called it the Stevenson House, for the people who sold it to them. Before it joined the fate of over a dozen demolished 5th Street structures, our old house stood facing east, just south of what would have been Kansas Street, if it had continued east of 6th Street.

As kids, we gazed out the upstairs window to the street below as if it were the Grand Canyon. Grandma lived to the north in the Dutch Colonial style house, which resembles a red barn today. To her north was the town dentist, Dr. Dallum. Across 5th Street lived Donald Stanley, who was a lawyer and the publisher of the newspaper, "The Peru Pointer." Mr. Barnes, a retired pharmacist, lived next door. To the north of them was the Peru Christian Church building, which has been gloriously resurrected as the Brownville Concert Hall.

To our south, resided Mrs. Conkle along with her son, Orville who was, as I recall, a handy man. Orville's brother, Ellsworth Prouty Conkle, a 1919 graduate of Peru State Normal School, was a nationally renowned playwright. According to Dan Sullivan's book, Nebraska's First College, Dr. Conkle had been a Drama Professor at the Universities of Iowa and Texas and the author of more than 50 plays. Among his students was Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Tennessee Williams. Dr. Conkle's works include "200 Were Chosen" (1936) and "Prologue to Glory" (1938), both produced on Broadway. Apparently, Dr. Conkle's Peru up-bringing and education did him no harm.

I attended Kindergarten in the T.J. Majors Building, under the tutelage of Mrs. Maryon Adams. Every morning my mother packed me off, under the supervision of my brother David, a second grader. Each morning we joined up with Dave's friend, Tommy Majors, on 6th Street, in front of what was then the Methodist Church before scaling the heights of the academic acropolis.

In addition to providing K-12 education, the campus school was a perfect place for college seniors to fulfill practice teaching requirements. The school was strong academically and athletically.

Our family moved to the farm near Auburn in 1960. By the time I entered 8th grade, Peru Prep had closed and my old friends David Adams, Scott Mc Kercher, Tom Combs, John Whisler, Barbara Brady, Peggy Sayer and Julie Gaines were back in my life. Auburn Public Schools maintained the Peru Elementary School for a few years before it closed. APS is an excellent system, but it is obvious Peru suffered a big loss when its youngsters were bussed away.

As the new-year opens, why not resolve to explore opening a grade school in Peru. APS and Peru State College could collaborate on a new campus school. Perhaps one of the churches could birth a parochial school. The home school model might be a creative way to go forth. Imagine an institution held to the highest classical standards. There is no better place for educational innovation than a small college town, lacking an elementary school.

Estate-planning forum scheduled for January 23rd in Peru

Marty Peregoy, Peru

I'm looking forward to hosting an informative evening with attorney John Chatelain Thursday, January 23rd from 7:00-8:00 p.m. at Peru's Plum Crazy Lady boutique and coffee shop. I'm hoping there will be a big turnout for the first of what could prove to be many educational forums of interest to Peruvians.

Not long ago I realized that I was woefully behind in my estate planning. I have sufficient life insurance, but I don't have a will that will help my family avoid the long wait and expense of probate. I checked with a few friends and found that they were in similar circumstances, so I gave John a call to see if he would be interested in providing the basic information everyone should have. John has a big heart for Peru, and with the cooperation of Brenda Wemhoff, we were able to set a date and location.

Some of the topics John will be covering in the free forum include wills, probate avoidance, durable powers of attorney, powers of attorney for health care, living wills, and general considerations, such as funerals.

You've heard the old saying, "People don't plan to fail, they just fail to plan." According to a caring.com 2024 Wills and Estate Planning survey, only 32% of Americans have a will in place. "This means that a large majority of Americans have not created a legal document outlining how their assets should be distributed after their death." A further 40% of people don't have a will because they mistakenly believe they don't have enough possessions to need one.

After my father's death, my mother remarried to a man with eight children. My mother has four. He and my mother bought a house together and filled it with things from their past lives as well as new things they purchased together.

Here are some questions that appropriate estate planning can help answer in this situation:

1. If one spouse dies first, does he/she have to move out and sell the house?
2. How will the proceeds from the sale of the house be split among 12 children?
3. How do we make sure that pre-marital property goes to the children of the spouse that originally owned it?
4. Who gets to make the decision about life support, the children or the spouse?

Estate planning does more than just plan inheritance. It allows you to designate an appointee to get into your safety deposit box or apartment immediately upon your death, to appoint someone who will be in charge of paying your final bills, to designate any charitable bequests you'd like to make to your alma mater, for example, to determine whether or not there will be an auction to dispose of your assets, and how to store your important documents.

The forum will provide you with handouts and worksheets that you can use to talk with your spouse, family, special friend or attorney about your wishes. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend with or without your significant other. Plum Crazy Lady is a cozy setting for the event, and Brenda will be available to make your favorite beverage while you're listening.



Tuesday Literary Club Reads

DiAnna Loy, Tuesday Literary Club

With December we continued our theme of Senior Authors when Sylvie Shires presented The Autobiography of Santa Clause as told to Jeff Guinn. This book is one of historical fiction and, while creating a fun story for his children was certainly an incentive, this book soon became a bestseller. It is self-described as a “journey through seventeen centuries of Christmas magic!”

The story begins with Felix, one of Santa’s earliest helpers, visiting the author. Felix brings Guinn an invitation to visit Santa so he can get the real story of Santa from the man himself. The story follows the story of Saint Nicholas, born in Patara in what is present day Turkey in 280 AD. Nicholas was born to a wealthy family but sought to help others in need, well before becoming a well-loved and respected bishop. Even while a bishop, Nicholas continues his “night job” of helping the less fortunate. As I read this story, I had to remind myself that it was historical fiction: there is much fiction woven amount the historical facts.

The more good works Nicholas does as a bishop, the more miracles his contemporaries believe he can preform. At the age of 63, burdened by this expectation, Nicholas finally leaves in the middle of the night without telling anyone. As he travels, he continues to do good wherever he goes. As he arrives in Rome, he meets Felix, his first companion and helper. Felix is a slave and Nicholas buys his freedom. As they run out of funds and are looking for ways to replenish their coffers, they meet a merchant selling the first gospel copies, just loose sheets. They suggest to the merchant that he sell the gospels between two beautifully carved plaques of wood. Nicholas and Felix carve the plaques although Felix carves much faster, seeming without tiring. About this time, the pair also realize they can travel much faster than their contemporaries and they seem to have become immortal. A bit of magic surrounds their work. One of the things they notice about this magic is that it does not work as well when they are near places that are at war, so they work to avoid those areas.

As Nicholas and Felix travel, the story places their travels through factual history. They meet historical figures, many who help them by supporting their work in diverse ways; some even want to join them on their mission, leaving their old lives behind. Some of these individuals' deaths have remained a mystery throughout history such as Attila the Hun and his wife, King Arthur, and Amelia Earhart. Others join later like Charlemagne or Teddy Roosevelt. Others pay trusted friends to fake their deaths so they can disappear and join the cause.

As time goes by, the group grows and meets various challenges because of their size. The group eventually makes its way to the new world and finds the need to locate a home base away from the prying eyes of normal people. The North Pole is eventually selected, and the group sets about solving all the problems living at such a remote location will create. Members of their group such as Leonardo da Vinci and Benjamin Franklin set about finding a way to have airborne reindeer and building a large enough compound for everyone to work and live within but not be detected by planes flying over.

I enjoyed this book. It did a good job of keeping the timeline of actual history intact, while adding all of the information regarding Nicholas and his group into the timeline. Nicholas was never referred to as Santa Claus until he was in America. How that came to be and many world customs regarding him are things that help make the book worth the read.

Happy reading!

8 January 2025 Your Country Neighbor

You, too, can become a parli-pro, Part I

Marty Peregoy, Peru

Back in the dark ages when I was teaching high school, the FFA group competed in local, state and national divisions of an event called Parliamentary Procedure Leadership Development Event, or Parli Pro. In the event, participants were judged on their knowledge of parliamentary law and their ability to present logical, realistic and convincing debate and motions.

Many people think that parliamentary procedure is just for formal groups, such as 501C3s or government organizations, but parliamentary procedure has a place in every meeting that involves multiple attendees with differing opinions about what is important and what should be done.

Robert's Rules of Order is the foremost guide to parliamentary procedure in the United States. According to Google, it was written by Henry Martyn Robert in 1876 in order “to help assemblies accomplish their work and ensure that all sides of an issue are treated fairly.”

In this series of articles, I will explore the basics of parliamentary procedure so that community members can use it in their meetings with a sense of confidence and purpose. This article will focus on the making of a motion, discussion, and voting.

Many groups I have participated in struggle with deciding when a motion is needed. As the sole purpose of parliamentary procedure is to make sure that everyone with opinions is heard in an organized fashion, the simple answer is that a motion is always needed.

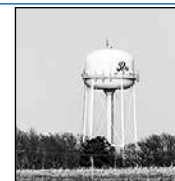
I know that’s a shock to some but think about it this way. When someone makes a motion by saying, “I move that we do ABC,” what they are saying is, “I think we should do ABC or I think ABC is a good idea.” Every motion requires a second before it can be discussed and voted on, in that order, because the act of seconding a motion means, “I think we should do ABC also or I also think it’s a good idea.” As soon as more than one member of the group thinks something is a good idea, the group can discuss it and vote on it. If there is no second, that means that only the maker of the motion thought it was a good idea, and therefore time does not need to be spent discussing it.

Continued on page 9 >>>>

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>>>> Parli-pro *Continued from page 8*

Here are the basics for making a motion:

1. A motion is a noun – a thing. You cannot say, “I motion ABC.” You must say, “I move...” If you are making a motion on something that has already been stated or if the president of the group says something similar to, “I will entertain a motion about...” you can say, “So moved.” This is especially handy when a long paragraph that you can’t possibly recall word for word has been stated. The motion may never be referred to as “a first,” despite the fact that the next required step is called a second.
2. After hearing someone make a motion, a person agreeing that the mover’s proposal is a good idea, will say, “I second” or just “second.”
3. The next step, which is often left out, is the opportunity for debate or discussion. The easiest way to get that started is for the president of the group to say to the maker of the motion, “Would you like to speak to your motion?” That gives the maker the opportunity to say why he or she is in favor of the idea. The maker of the motion may decline to speak, but that is rarely done, as speaking to the motion is the opportunity to convince the rest of the group that the idea is a good one.
4. When the maker of the motion is done speaking to his or her motion, the president of the group should turn to the person who seconded the motion and say, “Would you like to speak to your second?” Often times the person who seconded will say why he or she agrees with the maker of the motion, but he or she may also state something similar to: “I seconded for the purpose of discussion.”
5. After both the maker and seconder of the motion have had an opportunity to speak, general discussion by the other members of the group can proceed in an orderly manner by the president’s prompting, “Is there further discussion?”. Each person wanting to speak should be recognized by the president before speaking, as the president is in control.
6. Occasionally in large assemblies, the discussion can go on for extended periods of time, and it becomes necessary to limit the discussion. At that time a subsidiary motion can be made to limit discussion to five more minutes or two more speakers, etc. Subsidiary motions are a topic for another article.
7. Once all discussion is completed, the president will ask, “Is there any further discussion?” again. If there is none, he or she will restate the motion saying, “It has been moved by (name of mover) and seconded by (name of seconder) that we (state the motion). We will now proceed to vote.” This is the clue for the secretary to call the roll if a separate aye/yes or nay/no will be recorded from each member, or the president may state, “All in favor say, ‘aye/yes’, all opposed say nay/no.”
8. The president will then state whether or not the motion is carried or has failed by, in most instances, a majority vote.
9. If the maker of the motion does not receive a second, the motion dies for a lack of second, and steps 2-9 are omitted. The group simply moves on to the next issue at hand.

I know that making a motion and requiring a second before discussion is contrary to what many people think should happen. “After all,” they might argue, “how can we decide whether or not something is a good idea unless we discuss it first?” The purpose of making a motion and receiving a second before discussion keeps the group from discussing something that only one person thinks is a good idea. It’s a great time saver.

That’s it for the basics on how to make a motion, discuss it and vote. Next month’s article will discuss subsidiary motions, the language used in making them, who can make them, and under what circumstances they can be made.



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One of my favorite Bald Eagle photos.

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Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

Dear Readers, I hope you will excuse me for re-running this column from 2009. In re-reading it myself, I realize how little has changed in my routines over the past 15 years. About the only thing that is different is that we no longer have a cat. Perhaps I need to make one of those dreaded New Year's Resolutions to change things up a bit!

I wish you all a very Healthy and Happy New Year, and I thank you for all the positive comments I hear from you about this column.

December, 2009: It's the last Saturday before Christmas. I'm still in bed, half-asleep, groggily organizing my mental list of things yet to be done. But it's cold and snowy, a good day to lie in bed until the sun comes up officially. My husband reaches for the remote control and turns the TV on to the network morning show. We watch for about ten minutes and conclude that we haven't heard anything newsworthy yet, so we roll out.

He pushes the start button on the coffee maker; I take care of cat duties. He begins frying sausage for his own breakfast; I debate with myself between oatmeal and Malt-O'-Meal, or maybe yogurt with granola. Malt-O'-Meal wins. So far, we're off to our predictable and slow weekend start.

After breakfast I cart the hamper to the laundry room and toss in a load of pants and shirts. I find this is the least jarring way to actually start chores. You feel like you're accomplishing something while expending very little effort. I'm awake enough now to notice a fair amount of grit on the floor and make a mental note to sweep after I get dressed.

Returning to the kitchen, I notice an unfinished Christmas card on the counter. Better get that done. The mailman pulls up out front just as I'm licking the envelope. I could run out and holler for him to wait, in a jovial, neighborly sort of way, but I'm not dressed yet. My breeding is just good enough to restrain me from deliberately making a spectacle of myself.

I decide it's time to get cleaned up. While brushing my teeth, I notice that the sink needs to be cleaned. Might as well give both bathrooms a once-over. That was easy enough. Now I'm motivated to make the bed. I'm still in my bathrobe when the washing machine timer dings. I hang up the pants and shirts and toss in the whites. It's nearing 11:00 a.m. when I finally overcome my wardrobe inertia, and trade my PJs for sweats.

Hubby has been in the basement for awhile now getting geared up to install shelving in the guest bedroom closets in preparation for holiday visitors. He requests my assistance. We note the width of the shelving unit we purchased some months back and realize it's too small. "We can make this work," my husband assures me. His plan is to rig up a bracket on one end of the closet instead of mounting the shelving to the end wall. "That will leave a foot of inaccessible space in the corner," I point out. "Better to return this unit for the right size." It takes very little convincing to bring him around to my point of view. Everything goes back in the box. We tape it up. I spend 20 minutes looking unsuccessfully for the receipt. Oh well. They'll take it back without it.



Do you want to obtain your US citizenship? Come be a part of the Heartland Workers Center's citizenship class group. On Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm. Location: At the Morton-James Public Library at 923 1st Corso, Nebraska City, NE. 68410

For more information you can contact Andrea Hincapie at 402-427-0002 or email andrea@heartlandworkerscenter.org

¿Deseas obtener tu ciudadanía estadounidense? Ven y forma parte del grupo de clases de la ciudadanía del Centro Laboral (Heartland Workers Center). Los días Martes y Jueves de las 4:30 pm a 6:00 pm. Lugar: En la biblioteca pública Morton-James en la 923 1st Corso, Nebraska City, NE. 68410 Para más información puede contactarse con Andrea Hincapie al 402-427-0002 o al correo electrónico

andrea@heartlandworkerscenter.org

By now it's after noon. Hubby fries himself a burger and takes a nap. I opt to sweep (a quiet task) rather than unload and reload the dishwasher. Hubby wakes up when the phone rings. Since he's up, I ask if he can get the treadmill ready for use after its year-long hiatus in storage. He agrees, and we spend the next 20 minutes searching for the owner's manual, which we both know has been lying around somewhere in plain sight since I first brought up the subject about a month ago. Aha! The manual is found (nearly in plain sight) and hubby gets the job done. He even takes the treadmill for a test run.

It's 3:00 p.m. What have we done so far today? Not a whole heck of a lot. Specifically, very little of what's on my yet-to-be-done Christmas list. But it's only Saturday. I still have four more days. Yikes! Only four more days! I'd better get cracking!

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ARBOR CITY NEWS

News from Nebraska City

Bryan & Kelly Bequette Named NCCFF's 2024 Philanthropists of the Year

Nancy Feeney, NCCFF Communications Director



Bryan Bequette and his wife Kelly share a common ambition to make Nebraska City the kind of community people want to make their permanent home . . . a place to raise a family, build a career and, eventually, retire.

The Bequette's drive to achieve this is the reason the Nebraska City Community Foundation Fund (NCCFF) selected them as its 2024 Philanthropists of the Year.

"These two remarkable people embody Nebraska City Community Foundation Fund's values of Trustworthy, Caring, and Collaborative," said Foundation Advisory Committee member Brooke Chaney when she presented this award at NCCFF's annual meeting in early November. "Together, they have secured grants, built partnerships, and created opportunities that benefit all of us."

"The Bequettes are trusted, caring leaders who have created a lasting legacy of collaboration and community involvement," Brooke said. "They remind us that philanthropy is about giving to the people and places we love."

Originally from Los Alamos, NM, Bryan joined the Army in 1981 and did ROTC at Eastern New Mexico University, where he earned his bachelor's in mathematics. When he met Kelly 11 years later, he was a company commander and an Army helicopter pilot just back from Desert Storm and stationed at Fort Riley, Junction City, KS.

A Peru, Nebraska native, Kelly majored in math at Peru State College. She was working on her graduate degree in counseling and college administration and was teaching as a Kansas State University graduate student when she met Bryan in 1992. They married a year later. Bryan went on to get a Master's in Legislative Affairs from George Washington University in DC.

In 2008, Bryan and Kelly selected Nebraska City as the place they wanted to settle and raise their family. Exiting the military after serving 26 years, Bryan became the Deputy Chief of Field Operations at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. In 2012, Kelly opened the Keeping Room restaurant. In 2014, both Bryan and Kelly graduated from Leadership Nebraska City, Class #9. Later that year, Bryan was elected mayor of Nebraska City.

In his ten years as mayor, Bryan has put his organizational skills to use collaborating with city departments and committees to advance projects that will enhance the town's infrastructure. He works with the City Council and is also on the Economic Development Board and the CHI Community Board. On the state level, he is on the League of Nebraska Municipalities, where he is president-elect, which means he will be president in 2026. Kelly works with community leaders who want to make Nebraska City a beautiful place to call home. She has been on the Nebraska City Area Economic Development Board since 2013.

To beautify downtown Nebraska City, ten years ago Kelly worked with Joe Grimm and DeAnn Michel of Grimm's Gardens to acquire a 10-year-grant to get the flower baskets installed along Central Ave. in the downtown Nebraska City area. Concrete bump outs with planting spaces were added four years ago.

Kelly worked with others to get even more grants to maintain the flower baskets and bump outs along Central Ave. Support money came from business donations as well as grants from the Wirth Foundation and Nebraska City Growth Funds.

Kelly joined the Nebraska City Creative District, which was certified in 2023. "Legislation a few years before gave money to create economic and cultural development to small, rural communities that were struggling to build up their towns and bring the youth back home," she said. "We need a good quality of life to get our children to move back home," Kelly said. "The Creative District was designed to bring new business in, support our current businesses and enhance the quality of life for our citizens."

The Bequettes have three children: Sons Blake and Michael and daughter Taylor. They have two grandchildren, Ignatius and Winifred, with a third on the way in March.

ARBOR CITY NEWS

Morton-James Public Library Calendar of Events January 2025

All activities held at Morton-James Public Library (unless otherwise noted) 923 1st Corso, Nebraska City, NE 68410

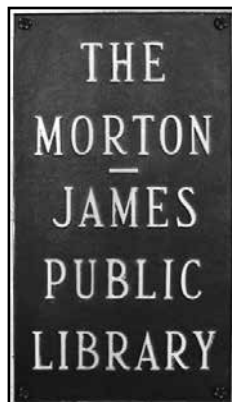
For questions call 402-873-5609 or visit morton-jamespubliclibrary.com

Chess Club
Every Thursday
4:00-6:00 PM

Lego Club
Monday, January 6
3:30-5:00 PM

Story Time
Wednesday, January 15
10:00 AM

Evening Book Club (3rd Wednesday of each month)
Join in the conversation any time of the year.
One Puzzling Afternoon by Emily Critchley
Wednesday, January 15
5:30 PM



Writer's Workshop - Join us to feedback on your own writing and to learn more about the craft of writing!
Email MJPLibraryww@gmail.com to get a zoom link, if you are unable to join in person. Free to attend. Everyone 15 years and older is welcome to come to the workshop.
Saturday, January 18
10:00 AM

Build an Animal Husky - Limited spots available. Must register ahead of time in person or by calling 402-873-5609.
Saturday, January 18
10:00 AM- Noon

Puzzle Tournament Registration is full. Call 402-873-5609 to ask about the next contest planned. Check in is for pre-registered entrants only.
Sunday, January 19
Check in 12:30PM
Competition 1:00-4:00 PM

Lego Club
Monday, January 20
3:30-5:00 PM

Day Book Club (3rd Tuesday of each month)
Join in the conversation any time of the year.
The Murder of Roger Ackroyd by Agatha Christie
Wednesday, January 21
2:00 PM



Library Closed for Inventory
Thursday, January 30

Adult DIY Shelf Craft Class



Must be 13 or older to attend.
Wednesday, January 29
6:00 PM

Patricia Chisholm
Kimmel Gallery Featured Artist
January 6-29, 2025

See two items of the artist's work on page 15 >>>

Donna S. Kruse, Director, Morton-James Public Library
923 1st Corso, Nebraska City, NE 68410
Office: 402-873-5609 Email: dkruse@nebraskacity.com

ARBOR CITY NEWS

News from Nebraska City

Patricia Chisholm
MJPL Kimmel Gallery Featured Artist
January 6-29, 2025

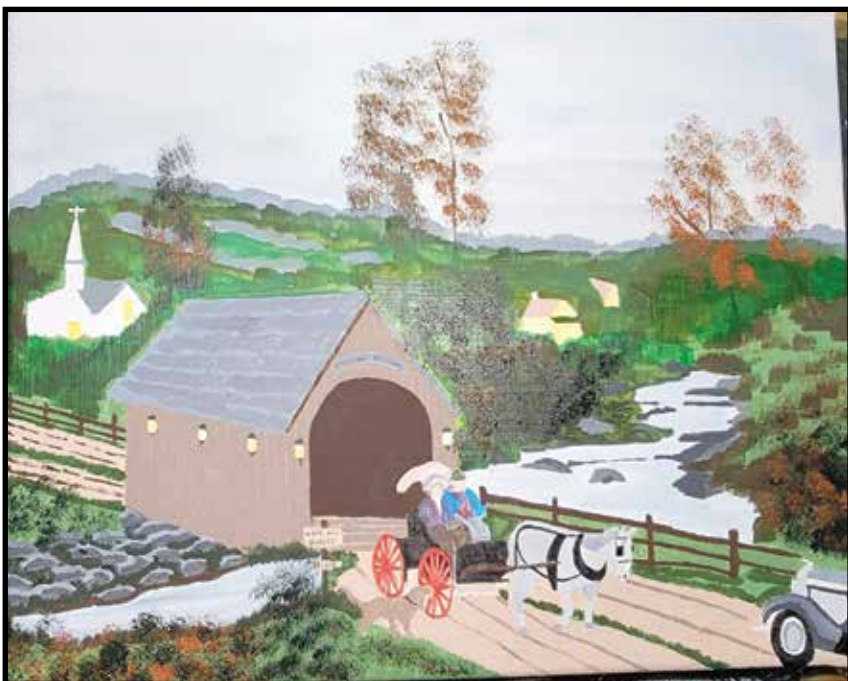


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Soaring above the auto loop around the marsh at the Refuge, the immature bald eagle is often mistaken for the Golden Eagle, very rare in this area.

ARBOR CITY NEWS

News from Nebraska City

Christmas List

Bruce Madsen

Christmas has come, Christmas has went
The allowable amount of time for acceptance has been spent
I don't think Santa paid any attention to the letter I sent
My anticipation and excitement for Christmas has been horribly bent

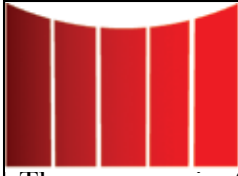
I received not a thing I asked for
Just a couple little items, nothing more
To be rejected has just put me on the floor
I'm not sure I can recover, not sure I believe anymore

The Harley I wanted was a beautiful bike
Saddlebags and chrome with whitewall tires, man what a sight
But I guess Santa thought it wouldn't be right
'Cause it wasn't under the tree on Christmas night

The Lamborghini I wanted, well, I guess not
I don't think Santa even bothered to look at the spot
Where it sat to be admired in the used car lot
I was sure this year Santa would come through, at least, that's what I thought

Two little gifts, wouldn't you think
That Santa would come through and not even blink
My list was short, straight forward, with not a kink
I can't understand why he would pause, and doublethink

Next year, maybe, I'll try again
I really don't think my list is all that lame
Two little items is all I'd gain
But I'll probably send another letter just to make sure he doesn't lose my name



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Trumpeter Swans wading in the shallow marsh

January
 Sheila Tinkham, Lincoln

Honoring the God Janus
 Roman he looked backwards and forwards
 This was a new month
 Added along with February to make
 Ten months 12
 January marks a new start, new beginnings
 Let us look forward to spring
 To a new year 2025
 Let us take each day and make it better than the last
 Kaizen gradual self improvement
 In 365 days to a new you
 HAPPY New Year!

January
 Sheila Tinkham

31 days days of cold and ice
 31 days of sledding and brisk walks
 January winter
 With all its icy beauty is here
 Savor the cold
 Unfurl your gloves and heavy hats
 Feel thrilled to be alive
 Hunker down to stew and Nebraska football games
 Cheesecakes and t bone steaks
 Throw in some mashed potatoes and
 A dollop of gravy
 Savor your January!

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

Returning to Grandma's House

Sheri Dowding, Syracuse

With my eyes closed
I opened the door
to grandma's house
to visit once more

On the kitchen table
the first thing I see
A huge bowl of popcorn
grab some or let it be

Near the sink with no faucet to drip
Stands a bucket of water from the well
A nail in the wall
holds the drinking dipper

A pot belly stove
fed with coal and wood
kept the kitchen warm
for the entire winter

Before electric wires
there was the kerosene lamp
mounted on the wall
with its mercury glass reflector

A stove and refrigerator
and a couch for comfort
farm houses got smaller in the winter
the stove only heated so much

A stack of farm magazines
mixed with Capper's Weekly
this was grandmas library
and her connection to the world

Grandpas desk was by the door
A drop leaf top with a drilled penny for a knob
was off limits to all who entered
we'd sneak a peek if no one was around

With my eyes still closed
the door creaks shut
I can still smell the popcorn
feel the heat from the stove

The taste of well water
the softness of the worn couch
the smell of geraniums on the windowsill
And the love that surrounded me

Trumpeter Swans in Flight



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ICE BOOMS

The frigid edge of wind cuts like an invisible knife on your skin that isn't covered by layers of warm fabric.

A brush of snow blows across the worn trail that follows the curve of the frozen lake.

Sounds are hard and harsh, as branches fight each other like sharp swords. An explosive boom, like underwater dynamite, shatters the silence. The tortured lake ice has split once again, in its journey from a liquid to a solid substance.

GREENHOUSE GALLERY

By mid-January, you may be certifiably bonkers because you can't stop thinking about flowers, the ones you plant yourself. But maybe you can cheat on Winter by planting seeds in pots under grow lights, and in south windows with grow lights, and you can even cheat again by building a greenhouse full of plants that are works of art in the ways that they grow and how they bloom. Color your days with happiness!

by Devon Adams, Peru

SPRING FLING

Last night the cold broke into a million shattered diamonds as the former flakes became melt water. The old house creaked with arthritic pain when the temperature suddenly began to rise, as a warm southwest breeze teased the frigid trees into supple beings who started to bend and stretch. By morning, humans and other critters relaxed and breathed the balmy air, knowing that it wouldn't last. January is not a kind force!

TURN THE PAGE

Reset the sun to shine longer, shorten the shadows, wake to a lighter sky, check the calendar for Valentine's Day. The gray stays too long, and strong sad feelings can ache in your heart until Spring pops up like a tulip. Hope blooms like a garden in the rain.

By Artist, Devon Adams
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Send to:

Devon Adams
P.O. Box 192 Peru, NE 68421

adamsdevon07@gmail.com 402-209-9377

HOUR BY HOUR

In the rush for tomorrow, today can get lost, not to mention the little minutes between the big hours. Your life will be more peaceful when you notice the slow seconds, when you are on your way from here to there. Every instant is the same length as every other instant, full of its own sights and sounds. If you notice, you may find tiny jewels that may have value far beyond a careless glance.

