

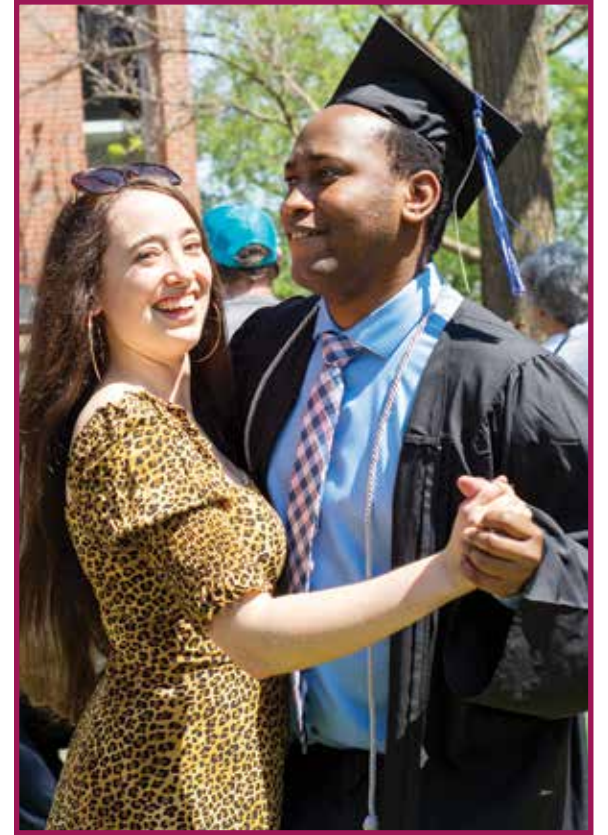
Your *Country* Neighbor Free!

June 2022

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Natives to Nebraska; the American Bald Eagle and the Cottonwood Tree. May 2022



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Your Country Neighbor

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

Plus, peruse the happenings in a Nebraska town on pages 7,8,9,12

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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

“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you make them feel.”

Maya Angelou

Covid in SE Nebraska

Stephen Hassler, Peru

New “Positive” Cases of Covid-19 (reported) in theses Southeast Nebraska Counties.
 The date overlap is due to irregular reporting.

<u>Date Range</u>	<u>Nemaha</u>	<u>Otoe</u>	<u>Johnson</u>	<u>Richardson</u>
04/06 - 04/19	3	2	2	2
04/19 - 05/03	0	0	0	0
05/08 - 05/21	7	24	2	7
05/12 - 05/25	6	33	3	8

After an apparent lull regarding infections, cases appear to be on the rise again, especially in the Northwest and Midwest. Do not become complacent. Use caution when and where appropriate.

To track Covid-19, google; your **county**, your **state**, covid.
 (example) otoe, nebraska, covid
Wear an N95 mask per CDC guidelines.
Wash hands often when out in public.

Your Country Neighbor

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

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Thank You!

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Old Maid Hill - Part 2

by the 'Late' Frieda Burston (continued from last month)

But when he asked where they lived, I had to say, "I can't tell you. Mama says never to tell where anyone lives because you might be talking to a bill collector. But all the row houses have names on the mailboxes at the bottom of their stairs." And we skated on and didn't look back until we turned the corner. He was knocking at the right door.

I knew what would happen, and it did. The next time I saw Old Maid Hill, I asked her. She shook her head unhappily. "Daddy and Mumzy say he isn't our kind of people."

I had a little hissy on that. I could feel my hair frizzling up just like a cat when it's getting ready to scratch. I told her, "You know what I think? I think Daddy and Mumzy aren't your kind of people either—I don't know what their kind of people is, but I think they'd like for it to be rich people. But they aren't that kind of people either, or they wouldn't be living here on a poor people street. Anybody who wears overalls isn't going to be their kind of people. My father wears overalls. So does Piggy's. Sylvia's father wears a butcher apron. I'll bet that if we were your age, Daddy and Mumzy wouldn't let us talk to you either. That man was clean and polite and he thinks you're pretty. If you don't go back to church again, you're crazy!" Her head went down lower and she whispered, "I can't. They wouldn't like it."

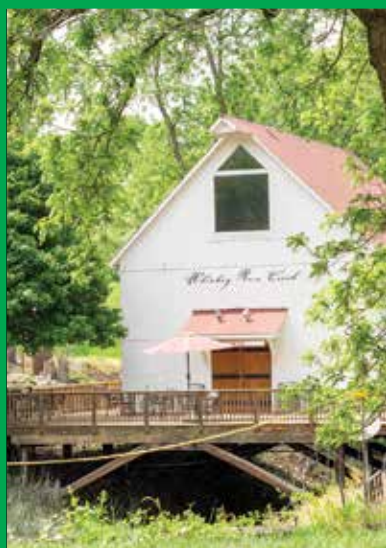
I frizzed up more. "It's like Cinderella's fairy godmother tells her, 'There's a ball with a handsome prince, I just made you a new dress and some glass slippers—' and Cinderella says, 'Thanks, but it's so cozy, sitting here in the ashes——'

"If you want to sit in the ashes all your life, go ahead. You've got no more gumption than a rabbit. Not even a real rabbit, a stuffed rabbit. And I'm not going to do any more for you. From now on, I'm not going to talk to you anymore, neither will Piggy or Sylvia. You'll have to talk to yourself, or else you'll go back to that church and find someone who WANTS to talk to you. And if he's not Daddy's kind of people, Daddy doesn't have to marry him, does he? And maybe you could be his kind of people— but I give up on you!" and I flung off in a fit of temper. Mama wouldn't have liked what I said or how I looked, either. I stayed away from home all morning, until I could unsnarl my face again.

We lived in the house with the garden for another two years, but the Hills didn't. I never went back across the alley again, I was so mad at Old Maid Hill. So it was Miz. Scott across the street who told me the news— Miss Hill had married and they were all moving out to the edge of town below Hickory Street, where her husband had added on to his big old house to hold Mr. and Mrs. Hill too.

Miz Scott looked at me curiously and said, "She tol' me to give you thanks for the glass slippers— now where would a young'un like you get glass slippers?"

"Oh, not real, just a joke we had," I told her. Then I licked my fudgey fingers and told Miz Scott that she made the best brownies on the street, and she gave me another one, and one to take to Piggy.



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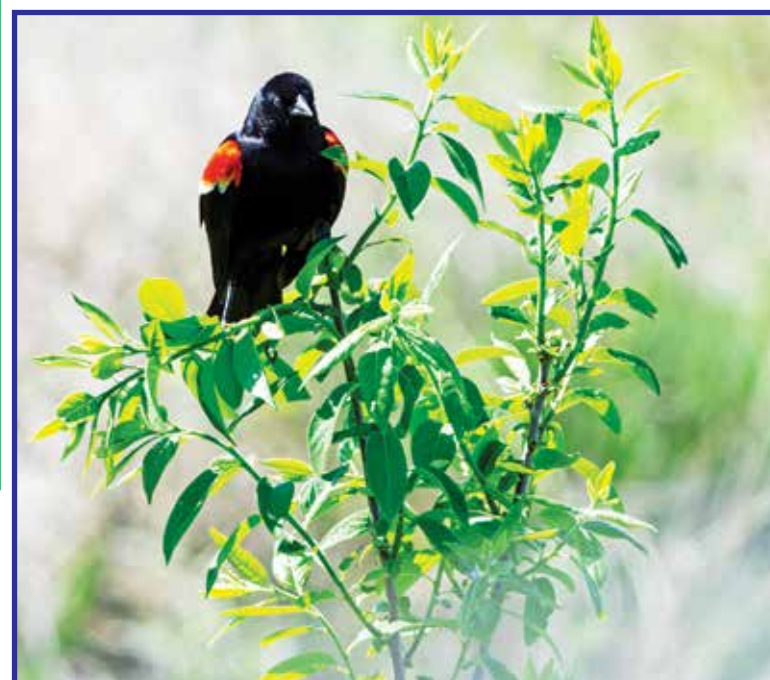
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This was the only Bald Eagle I saw in May.
It was at the wildlife refuge about
half an hour south of Brownville.

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American White Pelican, one of two pelican species in North America. The other species does not migrate.



The Great Blue Heron.
Common in most of North America.

Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson, Auburn

Hubby has always been a grilled meat and potatoes kind of guy. But earlier this week he announced that he was going to make a casserole. Up until now, goulash was as close as he came to dabbling in the “hotdish” category. Grilling is manly, but casseroles are sort of...well, not manly. So, I’m not sure what motivated him. Probably no big identity crisis, right??? More likely he noticed the more-than-adequate supply of stewed chicken taking up “beef space” in the freezer.

At any rate, he pulled out a large bag of stewed chicken and found a recipe calling for several ingredients also found in chicken noodle soup, which he makes regularly throughout the winter. Except for creamed soup in place of chicken broth, it pretty much was chicken noodle soup.

Noodle casseroles really should not be on the menu in our house, given the fact that we are trying to burn stored fat calories by fasting 14 hours between supper and breakfast. The carbs in noodles can’t be helpful.

But, we have an unwritten rule that whichever one of us is not cooking agrees to eat what the other one prepares. When it got to be 4:30, I mentioned to Hubby that he might want to get started so we could eat by 5:30. “Not to worry,” he replied, “the recipe says 30 minutes total of prep and cooking time.”

“In my experience,” I caution, “those prep time estimates are always low. Better get started.”

Hubby had barely begun assembling the ingredients when he had a question. “This recipe says two cups of frozen peas and carrots. Does that mean two cups of each?”

I advised him to use one cup of each. We had frozen peas, but no frozen carrots, so Hubby chopped up raw baby carrots into pieces smaller than my pinky fingernail to speed cooking. After adding the noodles and chicken he began rummaging in the cabinets looking for a 9 x 13 pan. He pulled out a 3-quart casserole dish, which was smaller than 9 x 13, but deeper. “This should work, right?” he said.

Not so fast, casserole newbie. “If you use a deeper dish, it will take the casserole longer to heat through, and we want to eat by 5:30, remember?” I directed him to the drawer that held the appropriate baking dish. In no time, the casserole was in the oven and Hubby was back on the sofa watching the news.

Five minutes before the cooking time was up, Hubby glanced toward the kitchen counter, and what did he see? Two unopened cans of cream of chicken soup that were supposed to be in the casserole. All was not lost, however. Hubby pulled out the dish, quickly opened the cans and scooped the creamed soup over the noodles, stirred the whole concoction together, and shoved it back in for another 15 minutes. So much for eating by 5:30.

The casserole was palatable, despite the crunchy carrot bits, but the recipe won’t be finding a place in my recipe box. In future, I recommend Hubby leave the casseroles to me.



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One of the Dogwood trees in residential Peru (not in Neal Park).



That's Noah!



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Appreciation for Teachers

By Angela Allgood

With graduations upon us and most of them over with, and May 1st - 8th was Teacher Appreciation Week, I started to think about my teachers and who meant the most to me. I am going to drop names, so I hope that all of the teachers do not mind, and also put a smile on their faces. I may not have been the best student, but I promise, you did teach me a lot! In grade school at the little Peru school, I loved Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Loretta Kruse, and Mrs. Janet Kirkendall. Then in middle school, only one name puts a smile on my face. Mr. Glenn Sheely. Now, for my high school favorites. When we talk about high school, there are two names that helped mold me. Mrs. Marcia Reeves and Mrs. Gwendolyn Vaughn. With Mrs. Reeves it was branded into my head “debit credit debit credit left right left right never changes”. Mrs. Vaughn taught me great typing skills used in all of my employment today. I was taught on a typewriter (yes, something younger students know nothing about) and let me tell you, computers are so much better. Those are my favorite teachers.

Let me introduce you to a couple of Peru residents who are teachers.

Angie Bowers lives in Peru and has taught at HTRS, Humboldt, Table Rock, Steinauer, for two years. Ms. Bowers is certified in K-12 Special Education. At HTRS she has a room full of 1st to 8th grade boys. ALL BOYS!

In August, Ms. Bowers will start with the Auburn Public School System. There, she will be working with 6th - 9th grade students.

I asked her why she chose to be a teacher and she said, “I love kids and wanted to be in a setting where I can help them learn and grow.” She also wanted to help be an advocate for the things in life they need as they grow. “As a teacher, I know I am molding and developing our future leaders and community members. I am passionate about instilling independence and curiosity in students.”

“Teachers” Continued on page 9 >>>>>>

National Outdoors Month

By Angela Allgood

Great Outdoors Week started in 1998 and became National Great Outdoors Month in 2004. It started out to remind people to slow down, unplug and enjoy nature at its fullest! Enjoying nature can mean wildlife and parks. It can be camping, kayaking and hiking beautiful trails. Not only do you see the beauty of life, you can mentally and physically relax, but you are also encouraging your children to be a part of a healthy lifestyle. It is a great way to encourage children to bird watch and see nature and wildlife. It is a great form of entertainment for the family and it is cheap, if not free. State parks charge a minimum fee for the day or you can get a yearly pass. Town parks and trail heads are free.

When you think of the great outdoors, I hope you think of being in Peru, Nebraska. The residents of Peru are lucky they can enjoy the great outdoors every day. We have beautiful scenery up and down the trail head, we can fish and boat on the mighty MO, and we can even go mushroom hunting in the hills. Peru residents can sit out at night and see a sky full of stars! I can even see all kinds of wildlife outside my window. I have seen a fox, deer, badger, and even a coyote, and I have even smelled a skunk walking by my window before, and I live in town!

Actually, you can enjoy the great outdoors in any part of southeast Nebraska. Duck Creek is 5 miles NW of Peru and is a 62-acre lake and a 200 acre park. Kirkman’s Cove is 2 ½ miles west and ½ mile north of Humboldt, Nebraska and is 511 acres with 160 lake acres. Steamboat Trace is 22 miles of hiking or biking that starts 6 miles south of Nebraska City, to just south of Brownville, Nebraska, and Indian Cave State Park is 3,052 rugged acres with 22 miles of scenic hiking and biking trails.

Everyone in Peru hopes you can stop by this summer and take advantage of the beauty we have. It will be great to unwind and have fun with the children. And, I am sure you can find a couple of towns-people who would love to share their fun times growing up in Peru!

Is This Love?

By Angela Allgood

Love is different things to different people. One thing love is not ... abusive. Or is it?

Yes, I am talking about domestic abuse and sexual assault.

Thank goodness there is a non-profit agency headquartered in Auburn, NE that provides free support and advocacy services to survivors of domestic and sexual violence, teen dating violence, stalking and human trafficking.

Project Response serves five counties; Nemaha, Johnson, Pawnee, Otoe, and Richardson. It is an agency that cannot report solid numbers due to them being a voluntary service. Often times police or hospitals will have more accurate numbers, but domestic and sexual assault are severely under-reported.

Alyssa, Project Response Sexual Assault Victim’s Advocate, stated that 63 people asked for their assistance in the last year. She also stated that their numbers fluctuate too much since they are still expanding their outreach in some of the counties. There were also seven sexual assault survivors and nineteen stalking survivors. Alyssa stated that these numbers do not include victims using Project Response more than once, but that “most families we help are repeat clients”. The average survivor will leave a domestic violence situation seven times before staying away completely. Project Response will help clients no matter how many times they have tried to leave their abuser. Leaving is the hardest part and this is when fatalities usually occur in abusive relationships.

Project Response has seen people from 3 to 87 years old but again, those are only the people who voluntarily came in for help.

Alyssa also stated that men do not report these things as much as women due to the stigma and the fact that they do not feel comfortable coming to them voluntarily for help. However, their agency did help twenty-four men/boys last year.

“Is This Love?” Continued on page 9 >>>>>>

Peru Area Women Connect

By Angela Allgood

This group was created in order to “enhance a space for Peru women to collaborate on ways to create a sense of community, support and belonging in our town.” It is a multi-generational group and is sixty-eight women strong.

- Some of the women have volunteered to do cooking lessons! A few ladies from the group got together and made Dakota Kuchen and have other cooking classes lined up!
- Also on the schedule is Evening Stretch & Serenity, every Sunday night from 7-8 pm. You can stretch and relax with friends or new ladies in the community then relax even more with tea afterwards.
- When the weather is good, some of the ladies get together and do a walk and talk on Sunday afternoons. This helps the ladies get to know each other better!
- The Facebook page even has a spot where you can sign up to be a mentor or mentee. The mentoring series runs about five weeks and can focus on your career goals or any area you want to learn and grow.
- There has also been a professional workshop on setting up and using a LinkedIn profile.

Future plans are to have more cooking sessions as well as having someone show us their love for quilting. This is the perfect way to get to “know your neighbors” for busy women who still need connection.

If you think you might be interested in joining this group of ladies, check out the Facebook page at Peru Area Women Connect Group. Then, contact a member and we will get you in the group!

Peru State College Book Sale

By Angela Allgood

If you LOVE books, you need to check out the HUGE book sale hosted by the Peru State College Library! The book sale is from 8-5pm Monday through Friday and will run through July 29. The book sale is located at the curriculum level of the college library.

You can get a bag of books for \$5.00. Cash or check only and you can pay at the Circulation Desk on the main floor of the library.



I even bought a bag full of books! There is something for everyone!



CANDLE

Alexandria Horcasitas

I sit there admiring her as she stares into the
mirror,
I see her face starts to cry,
I sit on the dresser cold and alone,
Waiting for her to light me with her flame,
I long to light up her life with my warmth,
I wish to fill her life with joy again,
While I sit on the dresser still admiring her sad
face,
I see her reach but I didn't know what for,
As she lifts up her hand I glance at what she's
holding,
She ignites the match from the box it came from,
Then carefully lights my wick,
I get a warm feeling that starts at the top of my
head,
I light up like the night sky,
Slowly then all at once,
I am the sun,
I am bright and warm,
I see her smile as I brighten up her face,
She looks as if she is glowing with a youthful new
face,
I feel fulfilled and have accomplished my dream,
Although I know my time keeps slipping away,
My light is starting to flicker,
It's fading quicker than I imagined it would,
I see a glimpse of her in the mirror,
Saddened by the sight she sees,
She is crying again,
I could not stop her from aging,
I feel as though I failed her,
I start to feel cold again,
Everything becomes dark.

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Tuesday Literary Club Reads

By DiAnna Loy, Tuesday Literary Club

Sylvie Shires gave the book review at our May meeting. She chose one of her own books for her book talk...The Oflag Manuscript. As we had the author available to talk with us, I am going to be paraphrasing heavily from her comments in my review.

We join our story in 1945, at Oflag XVII A, a concentration camp located in Austria, near the Czechoslovakian border, holding Polish and French POWs. One of them, Jean-Louis de Rochebrune finds himself miraculously transported to the planet Charatheas, where life has paralleled that of earth but only until the Reformation, which was a Christian revolution that drastically led Charatheas on a divergent path from earth. Jean-Louis marvels at the progress that took place there and is encouraged by the friends he makes on that planet.

Once returned to earth, his friend, Taranne, encourages him to consign his extraordinary experience to paper. Word of Hitler's death soon reaches the concentration camp and the German guards desert their posts. At word of the approach of the Red Army, the POWs prepare to leave the camp feeling they would rather take their chances of meeting up with a French or American liberation army than with the Russians. Packing only what will fit in his nap sack, Jean-Louis is forced to leave his manuscript behind. This step of faith will have amazing consequences.

Colonel Alyosha Mikhailovich of the Red Army discovers the manuscript a few days later, and feels compelled to take it with him. The defeat of Nazi Germany brings him in contact with US Colonel Fleming Sinclair-McPherson. An unlikely friendship develops between the atheist Soviet and the devout Christian American. They meet again at the Nuremberg Trials, but they are forced apart by the anti-western policy of the USSR. Alyosha mentions the manuscript to Fleming and translates part of it into English. The post war behind the iron curtain proves a journey as well for Alyosha, his family, and his close friend. Alyosha's new-found Christian faith helps him discern the true evil of Stalin's dictatorship. But this knowledge brings danger for those who can think for themselves, distrust the Soviet leadership, and refuse to tow the party line.

Years later in 1990 when Jean-Louis travels to Nebraska with his daughter for a Christian conference, he has no idea that the butterfly effect he set in motion forty-five years earlier by leaving behind his manuscript is about to bring an extraordinary outcome into his life.

In the words of the author "The character of Jean-Louis is based on my father's own story... Many of the events are real (life in the camp, artists, university courses, camp deserted by the German guards, the wood-burning truck, the Soviets eating rotten cow, not knowing how to rewind a watch; the "pass" in Cyrillic letters and the illiterate sentry...

Finally this fictional story that blends history and even science fiction has enhanced my conviction that nothing happens without a reason, that everything is part of a Greater Plan..."

Happy Reading.

"Teachers" Continued from page 7

There is a quote by Benjamin Franklin that inspires her and I can understand why. "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." This quote inspired Ms. Bowers because she whole-heartedly believes that "unless a student is involved and invests in what they are doing and what they are learning, they will never grow." Let that sink in for a minute and look back on your life. I never liked being "schooled".

I asked her to pick a favorite moment as a teacher and she mentioned the following story: "My favorite moment to date would probably be when my 1st grade English-Language Learner student successfully counted from 1-30 by himself! Seeing how excited and proud he was is a moment I will never forget!" She also stated that the "first day back from a long break is always fun as well; being able to hear what the students did and that they are happy to be back is a joy!"

Now that you have learned a little about Ms. Bowers, let me introduce you to Mrs. Vogt. Mrs. Vogt is also a Peru resident who has been teaching at Johnson-Brock for two years but has been teaching for 19 years. She worked at Hastings Middle School for 12 years and the Plattsmouth Middle School for 5 years and she just signed her contract with JB for her 20th year of teaching! Like all our school teachers, Mrs. Vogt also teaches a variety of grades and classes. Mrs. Vogt teaches 4th through 12th grade, Science, Reading, and Journalism. She likes teaching the three classes because it "gives me a wide variety of students and ages to teach.

Mrs. Vogt chose to become a teacher because she had a special teacher in her life. "The reason that I chose to become a teacher is because of my 6th grade Science teacher growing up. Mrs. Kirby was one of the best, and took great interest in me. I wanted to return that favor to the students that I would be working with. Almost like a living legacy -- to be able to pass that on to my students and the next generations. I know of at least a dozen of my former students that have gone on to teaching as a career."

She also had a great teaching moment that she wanted to share. "This year was when I received a letter from a student thanking me for teaching them for the last two years. School is hard for this student, but they felt like I made it so much better for them. To know that I have had that kind of impact is the exact reason I went into teaching in the first place."

A lot of teachers may never honestly know how much they impacted a student. I can guarantee you, there was always that one teacher that believed in you. I am thankful I had all the ones I had, and Ms. Bowers and Mrs. Vogt, are also impacting lives. Ladies, smile big because teachers do not always receive the credit they should... but you are always appreciated! (Even by the troublemakers in the class that you thought you could never reach, there is one out there thinking how much you truly helped them in life).



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Canada Goose; She was with her mate and two goslings.
I was too close to get all of them in my lens' field of view.

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<<<<< Is This Love? *Continued from page 7*

I also asked about Human Trafficking (HT) and to my surprise, she stated that there were three human trafficking cases in the last year. HT is happening in Nemaha County for two reasons. 1) we have a well traveled highway cutting through the county and 2) we have poverty problems right here in our own county. HT is when you are coerced into a sexual act for means other than money (food, shelter, etc.)

These figures are overwhelming and they are not even an accurate account. Project Response can use volunteers! They use volunteers for their food pantry, the crisis hot-line, and The Neighborhood Closet (funds the agency and donates clothes to survivors). You can also donate. It doesn't have to be money. They take household items, personal care items, and food. The Neighborhood Closet takes clothing and accessory donations as well. Many of the organizations around the county do fundraisers to help with food drives, personal care items, etc.

Project Response offers training on Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking to businesses, organizations and clubs at no cost.

They currently have one volunteer that helps cover the crisis hot-line. For cases specifically, two more volunteers would be ideal and they can always use bilingual volunteers. If you would like to volunteer, please call the Project response office at 402-274-5092. If you are interested in volunteering at the Neighborhood Closet, call 402-274-5202 and speak with Autumn, the store manager. Volunteers can be trained. Hot-line volunteers require more training and access to a computer.

To read more information on Project Response, domestic violence, or sexual assault, please go to <https://projectresponseinc.org/> and please, volunteer any way you can.

College and Community Work Together for City-Wide Clean-Up

By Ted Harshberger

It did not look like Mother Nature was going to cooperate, but there were enough breaks in the weather for the City of Peru and Peru State College to complete its annual city-wide clean-up at the end of April.

For at least 11 years, the College and community have collaborated on the event which is annually held the week before the Peru State commencement. The event was initially established by former president and first lady Dan and Elaine Hanson. The City of Peru has kept the tradition alive with the help of Peru State College.

City deputy clerk Angela Allgood led the efforts with the assistance from College staff member Peggy Groff. The event was made successful with the assistance of approximately 180 students – primarily Bobcat student-athletes and their coaches.

Allgood noted that over 84 loads of unwanted items were collected during the morning. Peru city clerk Charlotte Carpenter stated, "Thank you to all of the volunteers who showed up and helped with the city-wide clean-up. This annual event couldn't take place without you!"

While numerous volunteers picked up and hauled off trash, others walked the city and picked up litter that had accumulated. In addition, several individuals helped remove trash from around the College's grounds.

Groff secured water from the local bank while others donated food for the participants. She commented, "The acts of volunteerism and community pride were evident during this annual clean-up. I truly appreciate everyone who assisted."

Peru City News
is a volunteer project promoting
**Communication, Information,
and Pride in the Peru Community**

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See page two for contact information.



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Peru Community Church
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Pastors Raymond & Rebecca Girard
Services - Sunday 10:45 am



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

P o e t r y

“OLD MAN RIVER DAYS”

by Devon Adams, Peru

The street is full of fun
and laughter once again.
Recovery has been long
and grueling, as the little
town battles back from a
fight with a flood. At first,
the flood won, but things
are better now. Corn came
back to the bottom land,
people moved to different
houses, and soon the sad
relics of loved homes will
be erased to be replaced
with green spaces to be
enjoyed by even those
who still weep. It may be
that the “Muddy Mo” will
do it again, because it’s
happened before. When
people decided to start a
“management” program
after the last major flood,
they swore that no more
would the rage of the river
run over and ruin the land.
But it happened, just as in
millennia past when the
old river ran over it’s banks.
But at least the next time
our town won’t lose it’s
water supply, because it
will be coming from yet
another river?

SUNSHINE AND ROSES

A lacy curtain breathes
in and out with a breeze
that carries sunshine to
the inside of the house.
A heavy breath of roses
floats past the screen and
settles in the kitchen. It
touches all the cherished
china dishes set beside
the silver forks and spoons
and knives waiting on the
table. A lace and linen
tablecloth remembers
grandma’s Sunday smiles
as she used to feed her
family from her garden
that was crowded with
flowers around the edge
and vegetables begging
to be eaten. I think she
always knew that the
lovely memories would
come back every time
her family tasted summer
and smelled her favorite
blooms that are still there,
outside the kitchen door.

TWINS AGAIN!

Sun and shadow danced
with each other as a soft
breeze dappled a growth
of sumac. Moving spots
seemed to be alive as the
leaves moved to a melody
written by a wren.

But wait, some spots were
alive as the tiny pair of
fawns shivered at my quiet
approach. “Who is this
creature looking at us?”
their huge brown eyes
seemed to say. “Should
we run or pretend we’re
not here?”

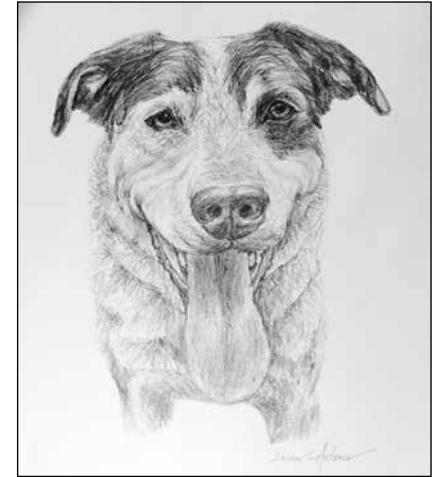
Of course they stayed
in frozen poses, at their
mother’s instructions,
and also in response to
generations of survival
instincts that have kept
their species alive.

It was my gift for the day
to stumble upon such a
miracle of birth and life.

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down by the creek
that weaves a wavy
line along the edge of
the deep brome pasture.
Wildflowers, bees and
butterflies are the
decorations, with
melodies provided free
by wrens and robins.
Cows and horses
wander to the fence
to wonder what is
going on, as the
collie, donkey and
llama lean in to listen.
Cats and kittens weave
among the legs of
humans putting on
this show, and there
among the crowd are
relatives from long ago,
who are invisible, but
like to mingle. They
started this big family
and will never miss a
get-together, ever.

LIGHTS IN THE DARK

They float in the dark
of a silent wood, those
magic bugs carrying tiny
flashlights under their
wings. Up and down,
over and around, the
lights flash on and off
in random patterns as
tree tops and clumps
of grass are examined.
If they bark, or squeak
or squawk, or whistle a
dancing tune, we can’t
hear it. The bug ballet
may be set to music
only they can hear, but
if you could connect
the flash dots into long
light lines, the little guys
would show you how
they’ve wrapped their
world with wonder.

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

GARDENS CULTIVATE LIVES TO PERFECTION

Dorothy Rieke, Julian

Gardening is the cultivation of plants; flowers, fruits, or vegetables. Flower gardening beautifies homes and yards. Vegetables and fruits are grown for the fresher tastier yields. Gardening provides relaxation, exercise, and the intense joy of seeing things grow. In fact, the visual effects of flower gardens and the productive nature of vegetable and fruit gardens delight and please most people.

Have you ever thought of planting a personal, imaginary garden in your life, a garden that is nurtured with admirable traits? This is the kind of garden that benefits you and impresses your family, friends, and associates. Because this garden is composed of unique personal characteristics, your way of life will be respected and admired.

Patience, persistence, and preparedness represent the “peas” of your garden. Patience is a matter of faith with calm endurance, tolerance, and understanding. Patience plays a leading role in lasting relationships and caters to understanding and compassion.

Persistence, a valued trait in accomplishment, is holding firm to a purpose or understanding. Despite obstacles, setbacks, and discouragement, persistence must reign for those who seek success.

Preparedness is linked to planning ahead. Planning carefully often determines success or failure and is responsible for overcoming setbacks, obstacles, and discouragement.

Another crop for personal gardens is lettuce. “Let us” be true and faithful to our friends. Relationships thrive on loyalty, trustworthiness, and dependability. A friend who possesses these qualities is valued and appreciated.

“Let us” obey laws. These restrictions are for our safety and comfort. They set guidelines for our behavior and direct us in right ways.

“Let us” show love for others. Love is an affection spreading kindness, happiness, and contentment. It grows without much nourishment in almost any climate or circumstance. This emotion is wonderful, especially when actions speak louder than words.

Nearly every garden is planted with different varieties of squash. “Squash” rumors as some rumors are harmful. Spreading rumors is a waste of time.

“Squash” apathy with industry, interest, involvement, and concern. Apathy results in “letting down” your associates and friends. Taking an active role in life means showing interest and concern with total involvement.

Turnips, a fall-bearing vegetable widely cultivated, makes our personal garden complete. “Turn up” with creativity which offers originality, use of imagination, and expressiveness. It transforms production and begins existence.

Another turnip is “turn up” with optimism. Optimism, working against apathy and discouragement, offers hope and encouragement.

“Turn up” with understanding. This trait is being tolerant or sympathetic toward the needs, feelings, and views of others. Compassion often grows next to understanding.

“Turn up” for integrity refers to an individual’s code of ethics or behavior. This quality creates self-respect and affirms values.

“Turn up” with smiles is a delightful concept. A smile introduces, promotes, and improves. Motivated by emotions or attitudes, it generally represents an expression of good humor or approval. A smile is an expression of good will necessary when dealing with others.

Similar to ordinary fruit, flower, and produce gardens, personal gardens benefit and enhance lives. At times, extra effort is needed to categorize and utilize our traits in thoughtful decisions, positive changes, and simplified options. These traits result in filling our lives with serenity, accomplishment, and fascination.

Cultivate a personal garden for great results.

Window On Fifth Street

Stephen Hassler, Peru

My favorite flowers have always been those that I grew up with on the farm; yellow roses, white peonies, four o’clocks with their variety of color, and lilacs. In more recent years I’ve enjoyed the wild phlox which grows at the edge of my yard. It’s delicate lavender scent is as close to lilacs as I can imagine. I often hear, “Stop and smell the roses.” Well, as I get older and slow down, it’s easier to do that.

I used to wonder why so many old people read the newspaper’s obituaries. I assumed it was because they were watching for the names of old friends or acquaintances. I don’t know when I started, but I know why; I read the obituaries in the New York Times each morning in order to familiarize myself with the great souls this world has lost, being grateful for the numerous things they accomplished, and to lament their passing. And if I recognize a name, I mourn just a little, and rejoice just a little, and if someone passed at an age younger than mine, I almost wonder why, but I know why. It’s because it was their time, a time different from mine. Which reminds me that I’m still here because I’m still doing what needs to be done, and hoping I’m doing it right. But one day, I might suddenly realize that I’m done; it’s over, and it’s probably time to go. No, wait! Give me something else to do! Or, whew! I’m glad that’s over with. I’m outta here!

But what if I should be born again? What’s next? Who would I choose for my parents? Where would I live?

I would want a house beside the road, with lilacs and their lavender scent. A window with a view, like my window on Fifth Street, beyond which the hills would give birth to the full moon each month and the warm sun every day. And the first light of morning would find birds singing their sweet joys of living, and sharing a nest with mates and offspring. And other beings would be passing by on the road, performing their solemn duty, unique, but every one connected; going to work, going to school, going...

I would want a view of the heavens at night, having had the stars be so much a part of my young life last time around. And blue skies and glorious sunsets, but only two seasons; Summer and January. And sunshine every day, but maybe not all day.

I would like to be near a quiet stream, deep and still where it bends, with willow reeds on the bank and dragon flies darting in the lazy Summertime. Add ball games at a picnic, a drive-in movie theater on the edge of town, and dancing in the park.

And the moon in the late evening, shining through my window, seeming to spy on me for staying up late. Then passing by overhead, once I’ve drifted off to sleep, returning another night to check up on me until I’m old enough to take care of myself.

And I would like a small table near my window with someone sitting across from me, smiling like sunshine and blessing my life by being there, and between us, a bud vase, a flower, and a scent of lavender.



The Goldfinch is in “full color” this time of year.

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This is the first time I saw a Mocking Bird in my yard. May 14, 2022.

Father's Day

Sheila Tinkham, Lincoln

There are lots of things I would like to say

To my Dad

Thank you for food, for shelter

For a good education

Most of all for being there

At track races, at basketball games

There is a saying behind every great man is a strong woman

For me behind this successful daughter

Was a strong father

Thank you Daddy

And for all the fathers out there working to provide and be
there for your families, Happy Father's day! You make a
world of difference.

Please if your Dad is alive, give him a hug, tell him "I love
you." I wish I could. My Dad has passed.



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Peru State Graduation, May 2022



College President Dr. Michael Evans welcomes the 2022 graduating class, as the 2022 Teaching Excellence Award recipient looks on.





Peru State Graduation, May 2022



Peru State College News

Volleyball Camp

The Peru State head volleyball coach Madison Kindle recently announced that the Bobcat volleyball program will be hosting a two-day skills camp on Monday, July 18, and Tuesday, July 19. Grades 1-4 will go from 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. each day while grades 5-8 will go from 12:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. each day.

- The cost of the camp will be \$60 per age group.
- The camp will be hosted by the Bobcat coaching staff and members of the Bobcat volleyball program.
- Campers are encouraged to sign up online at <https://www.perustatevolleyballcamps.com/>.
- For more information, please contact coach Kindle at mpeters@peru.edu.

Young Performers Camps at Brownville Village Theatre in July

Registration is underway for three summer youth theatre courses at the Brownville Village Theatre. Class sizes are limited and registration forms are available at:

www.brownvillevillagetheatre.com

Go to the Events tab and click on Young Performers for more information and the actual registration form, which should be submitted via email at bvt1967@windstream.net or mailed to: Brownville Village Theatre, PO Box 95, Brownville, NE 68321. Deadline is June 30.

All classes will include a sharing performance for parents/family to attend at the end of camp.

Peru State Students Attend Nebraska Museums Association Conference

This spring, Peru State College students enrolled in the new public history certificate program had the opportunity to travel to Holdrege, NE, to attend the Nebraska Museums Association Conference.

The conference included a half-day workshop on Visual Thinking Strategies where students learned how to develop strategies for engaging visitors to museums in visual exercises that promote interaction with and curiosity about collections. The half-day workshop provided time for fun improvisation activities and small group work. Students also had the opportunity to attend several concurrent sessions on a variety of public history topics, and the conference included dinner and lunch opportunities to network with and meet other museum professionals.

Peru State College Hosts Research & Creativity Expo

More than 40 students participated in the recent Peru State College Research and Creativity Expo. This was the third year the College hosted the event.

Under the direction of the Research and Creativity Expo Committee, the event was divided into two sections – Poster and Creative Exhibitions and Creative and Oral Presentations. Dr. Timothy Borchers, Vice President for Academic Affairs, chaired the committee. Dr. Borchers noted, “The Research and Creativity Expo allows our students to showcase their scholarly and creative works. This opportunity develops their skills in critical thinking and communication, which are important skills for the workplace or graduate school.”

Bryanna Woodard provided the following comments about her experience with the EXPO: “The Research and Creativity Expo provided me with the experience of presenting my research to the campus, which will help me in the future when I present my graduate research. Pursuing undergraduate research at Peru State has provided me with the skills and techniques that are necessary to allow me to move up into graduate-level research and it has also allowed me to build lifelong relationships with faculty members.”

One of the busiest individuals at the Expo was Rebecca Hupp, sophomore history major from O’Neill. Only a freshman, Hupp had four different entries in the Expo. She commented, “Two of my projects were for the history classes I was in, one was for the theater conference I went to, and the last one was a last-minute addition about the trip I took to Washington, D.C. I really enjoyed the research that went into my two history projects and getting the chance to share my experiences. This year has shown me all the fantastic opportunities open to students at Peru and just how willing the faculty here are to help students succeed in areas outside the classroom.”

Peru State College President Dr. Michael Evans stated, “Peru State College provides countless opportunities for students to roll up their sleeves and put their learning into action. Through this process, students will deepen their understanding not only of their specific subject but also of the way knowledge is created and new information is learned. Those skills will serve students well for the rest of their lives. The displays and presentations made in this Expo are testaments to their accomplishments and they should be proud of their results.”

Six Recently Inducted into PSC’s Alpha Chi

The Alpha Chi National Honor Society was founded in 1922 to recognize and promote academic excellence among college and university students of all disciplines, to encourage a spirit of service and leadership, and to nurture the elements of character that make scholarship effective for good.

Dr. Sara Westerlin, assistant professor of education, serves as the advisor for the local chapter. Dr. Westerlin noted the six inducted (majors and hometown included): Kelsi Leininger – senior human resource/risk management and public administration from Shenandoah, Iowa; MaKayla Nagengast – senior disease and health from Falls City; Kristin Olmstead – senior K-6 special education from Nebraska City; Rylee Pieper – senior biochemical science from Western; Olivia Welch – senior K-12 special education from Peru; and Bryanna Woodard – senior wildlife ecology from Homer.

Pieper, who serves as president of the local chapter, stated, “We have done many community service projects, and our induction ceremony went very well. It’s an honor to be in the top ten percent of students on campus and I am glad we got to celebrate these students with our induction ceremony.”

Ingram Selected as 2022 NSCS Teaching Excellence Award Recipient

The Nebraska State Colleges Board of Trustees has selected Dr. Robert Ingram, Jr., Associate Professor of English, as the 2022 Teaching Excellence Award recipient for the Nebraska State College System. “Dr. Ingram is an outstanding educator who is passionate about the success of each student. His dedication to students reflects the core values, mission and vision of Peru State College and the Nebraska State College System,” said Chancellor Paul Turman of the Nebraska State College System (NSCS). “His dedication and devotion to the field of education serves as an example to those seeking to positively impact students’ lives.”

Dr. Kelly Kingsley, Associate Professor of Education at Peru State College said, “Teaching excellence, to Dr. Ingram, is lived out in so many more ways than through classroom instruction. While his instruction is strong, his knowledge, skills, and dispositions in education are exceptional as well and they show far beyond the four walls of the classroom.”

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