

Your *Country* Neighbor **Free!** May 2022

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



Migrating Sandhill Cranes, Kearney, Nebraska. March 27, 2022



Northern Cardinal. April 21, 2022

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Last Month Was Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

But some haven't learned;

WHAT A WOMAN WEARS IS NO EXCUSE FOR MEN'S BAD BEHAVIOR!

(Don't blame the victim!)

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

P.O. Box 126
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Online; 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

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

Maya Angelou

This Month's Writers & Contributors

Devon Adams 13

Angela Allgood, Peru City News, 7,8,9,12

The Late Frieda Burston 5

Stephen Hassler 2, 14

Merri Johnson 5

DiAnna Loy 9

Ean Miller 8

Dorothy Rieke 14

Shiela Tinkham 3

Theresa Westfall 7

Thank You!

Covid in SE Nebraska

Stephen Hassler, Peru

New "Positive" Cases of Covid-19 (reported)
in these Southeast Nebraska Counties.

<u>Date Range</u>	<u>Nemaha</u>	<u>Otoe</u>	<u>Johnson</u>	<u>Richardson</u>
02/07 - 02/21	31	63	12	55
02/20 - 03/05	19	127	3	55
	(Peak of Omicron Variant)			
02/24 - 03/09	11	122	2	53
03/10 - 03/23	2	8	0	6
03/23 - 04/05	5	6	1	1
04/06 - 04/19	3	2	2	2

**Covid cases are much reduced, but are still around.
Be prudent, not complacent.**

Track Covid-19 in your county. Search covid case updates.

Google; your **county**, your **state**, "covid"

Wear an N95 mask per CDC guidelines. Wash hands often when out in public.

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May

Sheila Tinkham, Lincoln

I frolic in the sunlight
My heart full of delight...

Why?
You and me
May day and love that
Sings heat, delight, flowers and love, love, love

May runs after June
Like kids playing tag
One month rolls into another

And I savor May its tender buds
And nectar sipping hummingbirds
I embrace you May...
Do not depart but stay...



Titmouse, common year round, noisiest in Spring.

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This Blue Jay doesn't have much of a crest; might be a young one.



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Readers, Please Note:

The article below was written more than a decade ago by Frieda Burston (now deceased), who used to be a regular contributor until she passed sometime before 2008. I was reading through some old material and was re-awakened by the rich history that Frieda brought to “Your Country Neighbor,” having grown up in St. Joseph, Missouri during the depression. I will try to find room in the future to share some of Frieda’s stories.

Here is part 1 of 2 parts. Part 2 coming next month.

Old Maid Hill

by the ‘Late’ Frieda Burston

They lived in a “row house” across a side alley from us, facing away. Six small houses were side by side, a common wall with each neighbor in the row, but a separate mailbox at the bottom of the shared stairs. The Hills lived in the end house: Mr. Hill, Mrs. Hill, and Old Maid Hill, who was about 10 years past marrying time.

Mr. Hill didn’t talk to himself, but he had what I recognized— even at ten years old— as being an exaggerated idea of his own importance. He had been a streetcar conductor, and still wore dark pants and a dark jacket with a white shirt, even around the house. He always looked as if he was going to church, but he stayed home most Sunday mornings. I could see him across the alley, reading the Gazette to his wife, out in the back garden when the sun was warm. And always his last comment was as he folded the papers, “Well, we must remember that these aren’t our kind of people.”

Mrs. Hill was a prissy lady who simpered and acted younger than her daughter. She liked talking to me and telling me about her social victories of 30 years ago, and about beaux that Miss Hill had had—— but unfortunately, each one turned out to be “not our kind of people, you know” and I slid out of our conversations as soon as I could.

Old Maid Hill was probably pretty at the time I was born, but by the time I knew her, her shoulders drooped and she looked discouraged. She reminded me of a bird who wished she could raise her wings and fly a little but didn’t realize that what held her back were cage bars. I went over and talked to her whenever I saw her out, because I never saw anyone else ever talk to her.

Mama said that maybe the Hills didn’t want their daughter to grow up because then maybe she could marry and leave them, and then who would clean the house and cook supper and iron their clothes? So they treated her like a child, and she had never had a chance to grow up. And she stayed at home because home was the only place she had ever been after eighth grade was over.

It was too bad, said Mama, it was too bad that the Hills didn’t go to church. Church was a great place for meeting nice people. So the next time I was over there, I asked her about church. Well, yes, they went to church when Daddy was still working, but after they moved here they quit. Daddy felt that it was too tiring for Mumzy and her to go, but Daddy went once in a while by himself. Well, couldn’t she go by herself to a church around here? There wasn’t a church around here, she told me. “Oh yes there is!” I said. “There’s an old store across the street on the next corner, and a church moved into it. The boys at school said it’s a Holy Roller place, and people get excited and roll around on the floor and cry and scream in different languages, and they call up the Devil— only that’s all lies. Sylvia and I skated past there one Sunday morning just to see them roll around, but they were all sitting in chairs listening to the preacher, and we didn’t see anywhere they could roll around, anyhow.

Continued on page 16 >>>>>

Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

When was the last time any of you went camping? Our last actual camping trip was several years ago with our grandchildren, when the thrill of poking the campfire with a stick and the novelty of sleeping in a tent was enough to offset their annoyance with pesky mosquitoes and mildly musty-smelling sleeping bags.

Not too long ago, Hubby expressed a desire to go camping again. It may have been when we were visiting Big Bend National Park in Texas back in early March. We did a fair amount of hiking, which we enjoyed, but we stayed in a motel and ate in a restaurant. As I recall, Hubby was pretty tuckered out after a day of hiking. He was most certainly not up for cooking over a fire, sleeping on the ground, and stumbling out of the tent in the middle of the night. Neither was I, for that matter. The closest we came to “roughing it” was eating cereal one morning out of our in-room, disposable coffee cups in lieu of actual bowls so we could skip the restaurant and get out on the trail early.

I recently got a taste of camping again, helping with a Nebraska Game and Parks outdoor event for 4th and 5th graders. As a member of the Nebraska Master Naturalists, I am obligated to contribute 20 hours of volunteering each year with events or projects that promote enjoyment or conservation of natural resources. So, lacking much in the way of actual expertise, I signed up to help with Campfire Games. I figured I could handle that. But for some reason I was re-assigned to the Outdoor Cooking session. Oh-oh. Fortunately, I only had to show up and follow the lead of the people who actually knew how to make waffle s’mores and fruit cobbler in cast iron implements.

The day of the event started out pleasant enough. Mild and breezy in the morning. But by 1:00 – surprise!! – the wind was blowing at 35 mph. No matter where you stood, the smoke and ash blew your way. Our paper plates were constantly blowing off the tables and everyone’s eyes were stinging from the smoke. So, pretty much like camping.

Lucky for me, I could go home and get out of my clothes, which reeked of wood and charcoal smoke, and take a shower in my own bathroom. No trekking a block to a bathhouse, toting my towel, toiletries and fresh clothes with me, hoping, futilely, that there will be a dry place to set my clothes while I “enjoy” a lukewarm rinse. If you’ve never showered in a public bathhouse at a campground, you have no idea what a luxury your own private bathroom is.

So, if Hubby brings up camping again, I think I’ll suggest we pitch the tent in the backyard and light up the firepit. Ten bucks says Hubby abandons the tent and sneaks inside to his own bed by midnight. I’ll be right behind him.



PSC inaugurated Dr. Michael R. Evans as its 34th president on Wednesday, April 20. Above, First Lady Joanna Evans \addresses the crowd.



Here are only a few of over 3,000 eggs hidden all over the Peru State College Campus. It was an eggcellent day!
(Photo by Vanessa Sherman)

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Painting of the *Peru Brick House* before the flood, by local artist, Devon Adams.

Vote
May 10

PERU CITY NEWS

Communication • Information • Pride In Community

Vote
May 10

Old Man River Days

by Angela Allgood

The members of PCIG and the community wanted to make Old Man River Days an exciting weekend.

Mark your calendars for so much fun starting Friday, June 3 until Sunday, June 5th. Friday night, the town is going to kick things off with a Scavenger hunt starting at 6 pm. During this time, you can also sign up for Peru's Got Talent and look at the Silent auction items inside the City Hall.

Once you are done with all that, head over to Zach's Bar & Grill and get in a Cornhole Tournament. Don't forget to head up to the 5th Street Post at 7 pm for the Fish Fry and music!

Whew! Are you ready for Saturday? Family Fun starts early! Starting at 6 am you can be in a fishing tournament hosted by Zach's Bar & Grill then at 8 am you can be a part of or simply cheer on friends at the volleyball tournament. Volleyball is also at Zach's Bar & Grill. And the day is just beginning. From 9 am until noon, there will be a car show, street vendors, Loretta's Donuts and Curtis Wayne Stroud and a kids carnival full of fun games and prizes!

Still want fun? Okay! From 9 am until noon there is also a Book Sale, at 10:30 am is the community loved cake walk and if you are starting to get hungry, you can get Hamburger and Hot Dogs from 11:30 until 1:30 and help the Peru Volunteer Fire Department.

I'm not done yet! At 1 pm there is Music Bingo at the Gazebo and a Quilt Show at the Christian Church! By 3 pm we can all be entertained with a Talent Show at the Gazebo and if you are hungry and thirsty, starting at 6:30 pm you can go to 5th Street Post or Zach's for dinner and drink specials. At 8 pm make sure the kiddos are in bed so mom and dad can go to the street dance and beer garden. The Band "Dirty Boots" will be playing.

Okay, you may think we are done. And we do have Friday and Saturday out of the way, but Sunday has even more fun awaiting!

Sunday is fun day at Duck Creek! Starting at 9 am you can enjoy Duck Creek from the inside of a kayak. At 11 am, there will be a quick lesson on life saving skills for kids so they can enjoy the water all summer and at 12 pm Game Warden Bryan Adams will give us safety lessons.

Okay, now we are done! Spread the word. Invite friends. Tell people from neighboring towns. Let's make this OMRD something to remember!

Mount Vernon Cemetery

by Theresa Westfall

Mount Vernon Cemetery is located on the bluff overlooking our town of Peru, Nebraska. It is a gorgeous cemetery that we want to keep this way for years to come, and is the final resting place of some 2200 of the area's citizens dating back to the 1800's. The cemetery is managed by the Mount Vernon Cemetery Board: President Theresa Westfall, Secretary & Treasurer Shirley Robbins, Annie Hendrickson, John Patterson, David Pease, Rhonda Hamilton, Tim Pugh and Marty Peregoy. As a non-profit, funds are limited, and many expenses occur every year, including the biggest expense - grounds-keeping. Due to vandalism, expenses like replacing signage and repairing the chapel occur regularly also. The board meets annually prior to the mowing season in March. Burial plots currently cost \$350 each and may be purchased through Shirley Robbins; however, the sale of plots is not sufficient to cover the cost of maintaining the cemetery

The Peru Cemetery Auxiliary exists to help raise money for the care and upkeep of Mt. Vernon Cemetery and to help the Peru community in times of need. The volunteers on the auxiliary and in the community spend countless hours every year making and serving funeral meals in support of community members after the loss of a loved one. While this is done at no expense to the family, donations to help defray costs are welcome. Annually the auxiliary transfers surplus funds they have raised throughout the year to the board in an effort to offset expenses for the upkeep of the cemetery.

In recent years, in-person fundraising has been limited, due to the pandemic. This year the Auxiliary is excited to announce our Annual Memorial Day Fundraiser will include a Pancake Feed Sunday May 29th from 8 am – 11 am at Peru's City Hall. All are welcome, and free-will donations will be accepted at the door. Pancakes, sausage, eggs, juice & coffee will be served. Donations for the Annual Memorial Day Fundraiser or memorials can always be mailed in to Peru Cemetery Auxiliary c/o Theresa Westfall, PO Box 453, Peru, NE 68421 at any time throughout the year. Please consider donating to help preserve the beauty of our cemetery for generations to come.

Eggcitement at the Easter Egg Hunt!

by Angela Allgood

The Eggcellent Easter Egg Hunt on the Campus of a Thousand Oaks took a lot of hard work.

Black Student Union (BSU) helped fill the Easter eggs again this year. They have helped with filling eggs for almost a decade. This year there were 7 BSU members who helped stuff most of the 3,000 eggs. Faculty Advisor to the BSU group, Dr. Kristi Nies stated, "Black Student Union members always look forward to helping fill the Easter Eggs! It is a great opportunity to help out the City of Peru and for the students helping to meet members of the community. We're always grateful when the community groups involved reach out to BSU for help with this. And, of course, BSU members serve as quality control – sampling a bit of the candy to make sure it is good enough for the little ones!"

The other PSC organization that helped this event to be successful was the Rotaract Club. It was the Rotaract Clubs first year helping and they were impressed with how many families attended. Faculty Advisor Amy Oestmann said that the PSC Campus was a great place to have the event. They children were split into three age groups, they were able to spread out nicely, and the college sidewalk system helped with clear borders. The Rotaract Club was in charge of hiding the prize-filled eggs. Ms. Oestmann also stated that having 3,000 eggs was "enough for the children to leave with their baskets full. The Rotaract Club also took children to their age-appropriate areas and gave them the green light to "Go!"

Vanessa Sherman with PCIG (Peru Community Impact Group) said it was a great turn-out. She guestimated that there were over 100 kids there! She also stated that each group had a golden egg so whoever found that egg received an Easter Basket.

Louise W. Mears, Ed.B., The Hills of Peru, 1911

Interred Mt. Vernon Cemetery

Submitted by Theresa Westfall

“Have you ever climbed the long hill to Mt. Vernon Cemetery? With conscious effort you walk up the long grade, head bowed, eyes downcast when, pausing to get your breath, you lift your gaze to the horizon, and suddenly all your weariness disappears under the magic of the scene spread in unmeasured expanse before you. Then the world is beautiful indeed! The village in the valley below! The Normal School buildings rising above the oak forest like Heidelberg Castle on the German hillsides! And, as evening approaches, the deep green foliage starred with electric lights!”

Annual Memorial Day Fundraiser

Submitted by Theresa Westfall

Supporting Mount Vernon Cemetery
Hosted by the Peru Cemetery Auxiliary

Pancake Breakfast!
Sunday, May 29th 8 am- 11am

Or mail in a donation to:
Peru Cemetery Auxiliary c/o Theresa Westfall
P. O. Box 453 Peru, NE 68421

Mark Your Calendar Saturday, May 14
10:00 am to 1:00 pm Peru City Hall

Bring houseplants or annuals/perennials that you would like to share with others, and go home with something new. Or just stop to “talk plants” with some like-minded people. The last half hour all plants are up for grabs without an exchange. If you’d like to donate old pots, that’s fine, too. Bring your plants in anything that works for you. Slips rooting in water are also fine.

City Council Notes

by Angela Allgood

- ** The city will be running diagnostics on the Splash Pad April 26TH and it is scheduled to be turned on Memorial Day weekend.
- ** Peru State College is getting geothermal wells for the library and CATS building and the Quad will be torn up all summer
- ** Nebraska State Forest Service has green space plans developed and will meet with the subcommittee at a later date to discuss the plans.
- ** Playground equipment - City received feedback that we have not received the grants we have applied for to date. Solie has discussed with PCIG holding a brainstorming meeting to review ideas and recruit community members to assist with fund-raising.
- ** Nebraska BEST- nonprofit works with landlords and renters providing financial assistance for both. They are interested in expanding into Nemaha County and further into southeast Nebraska.
- ** The city is working with DHHS to help qualified residents pay their utility bills

Continued on page 12 >>>>>>

New City Hall Hours

Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri; 8:30 to 4 pm

Wednesday; 8:30 to Noon

Wednesday; Noon to 4 pm either by

Phone or Email;

402-872-6685

cityclerkcityofperu@gmail.com

Student Life

by Ean Miller, Sophomore at PSC

As spring falls upon the campus of a thousand oaks, the weather confusingly shifts from hot to cold. For many students, the same could be said about the outlook on the rest of the school year.

As finals approach, many students find themselves in a “make-or-break” situation; they either pass and make it, or despite all attempts, break it. A simple spelling error on the final paper can be the deciding factor for passing or not, so many students pack into the library to work on their finals and do everything within their power to finish strong for this school year.

Because of this, the library has a stronger heartbeat; tables and study rooms otherwise empty find themselves occupied, and students seek out every quiet corner that the building has to offer.

Even the coffee shop feels the pressure, as more students in the library mean more sales, and evening study sessions often demand caffeine to maintain productivity. The shelves of the shop are mostly empty. Where there once were chocolate-covered pretzels, there is now an empty void due to increased traffic combined with students needing to utilize what remains of their school-issued “bob-cat bucks” included with their meal plan. These, of course, do not carry over to the next semester, so it’s use ’em or lose ’em.

Generally, this is the busiest time not just for students, but for advisors and staff as everyone scrambles to finish the semester while also preparing for the next.

In just a few short weeks, the library will find itself empty and devoid of students, only being utilized by locals, staff, and prospective students touring campus as the student population makes its way home for the summer.

Peru City News is made possible by Peru volunteers and the following fine institutions;



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**Peru
State
College**

Philanthropic Educational Organization

by Angela Allgood

PEO Sisterhood was founded in 1869 by seven young college women enrolled at Iowa Wesleyan. PEO stands for Philanthropic Educational Organization. The mission statement for PEO is “where women celebrate the advancement of women; educate women through scholarships, grants, awards, loans and stewardship of Cottey College; and motivate women to achieve their highest aspirations.” It is “celebrating women helping women reach for the stars.”

This is one of the oldest women’s organizations in North America with close to 6,000 chapters and it welcomes women of all races, religions, and backgrounds. There are 6 Philanthropic Programs (loans, grants, scholarships, awards) that help women who are traditional or non-traditional students. It is a non-profit organization that has helped 116,000 women by providing over \$383 million grants, scholarships, awards, and loans and in seven years Peru AU has helped seven women. PEO is like a lifelong friendship. It strengthens the bonds of sisterhood and women of any age may be invited to join.

At the state level, Nebraska has over 200 chapters and has two projects (scholarship and grants). The Nebraska PEO sponsors an Assisted Living Facility in Beatrice, Nebraska, which was established in 1929. At the chapter level, the Peru Chapter is AU has one project (the Mary Ruth Wilson AU Scholarship which was established in 2004). They give a \$150 scholarship per semester to a female student from Auburn or Johnson-Brock going to either Peru State College or Cottey College. Cottey College is located in Nevada, MO and is a 4-year Liberal Arts college for women owned and supported by the PEO Sisterhood since 1927.

The Peru Chapter is AU and was organized in 1907 and are celebrating 115 years. Susan Pease is currently the President and is on her second year. There are 33 members. Nine non-residents and 24 local residents. The Peru Chapter AU has had three members become State President. Mary Ruth Wilson 1980-1981, Ruth Kennedy 1934-1935, and Nancy Wheeler 2018-2019.

PEO is an “invitation” only organization, however anyone interested in the scholarships, grants, and awards can contact Susan Pease and the Peru Chapter AU would be happy to help you apply.

Tuesday Literary Club Reads

by DiAnna Loy, Tuesday Literary Club

Our book for April was *The Invention of Wings* by Sue Monk Kidd; an historical fiction published in 2014. This book talk was presented by Susan Pease. Our story is set in Charlotte, North Carolina in the urban home of Judge and Mrs. Grimes. The book is divided in date ranges so it easy to place what is happening in its place in our country’s history.

Our primary characters are Sarah Grimes, daughter of Judge Grimes, and Hetty “Handful” Grimes, a slave Sarah is presented as her own on her 11th birthday. It is now Hetty’s (10 years old) job to see to all of Sarah’s needs and to sleep on a pallet outside Sarah’s door in case she needs anything in the middle of the night. Sarah has a problem; she has no desire to own a slave. One of the first things Sarah does is to go to her father’s library to look up the proper form to use for setting a slave free. Sarah completes this paperwork and leaves it for her mother to find. The next morning Sarah finds the paperwork torn up and she is informed that freeing Hetty is beyond her station; it is something she is not allowed to do.

Hetty also has a problem as she has never spent a night away from her mother, Charlotte. Hetty lays down on the pallet outside Sarah’s room but soon runs to her mother’s room and joins her mother in bed. Her mother explains she must return to the big house and walks her back to her pallet.

A little background on our characters...Sarah is quite intelligent and has been given free rein to explore her father’s library. Her father is a judge and her older brothers are studying to be lawyers and other professional people. Sarah has read extensively and discussed what she has read with her brothers. In her mind, she is going to grow up and study to go into an exciting profession just like her brothers.

Hetty, on the other hand, has spent many hours at her mother’s side learning to do all the things her mother does. Her mother, Charlotte, is the seamstress for the urban home, making all of the clothes for the mistress and her daughters as well as the slaves who serve there. Hetty shows great promise of being able to follow in her footsteps one day. The mistress has had many offers from her friends to hire Charlotte out but has jealously guarded Charlotte’s talents, never allowing her to sew for anyone else.

As the story progresses, Sarah and Hetty have many adventures; some of which land them in hot water. The first of which is when Sarah decides if she can’t free Hetty, she will teach her to read and write. Of course, they are discovered and both severely punished.

This book is engaging from start to finish and is highly recommended by myself and the ladies of the Tuesday Literary Club.



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1023 5th Street
5 apartments 1,568 sq ft



1100 Central Av, Auburn \$130,000
Commercial property, 2 overhead
doors, office space, corner lot.



703 13th St., Auburn \$149,900
5 bed, 2 bath, updated kitchen, for-
mal dining room, main floor laun-
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1604 G Street \$259,000
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approx .35 acre
2-car garage



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Auto Pay / Pay Online!

by Angela Allgood

City of Peru Alerts!

by Angela Allgood

**** CDBG-DR** - The pre-application has opened for these funds - which is a big step forward! Solie and Carpenter are working to schedule a meeting with SENDD to discuss the process and next steps. These funds could be used to cover the match that is required for cleaning up the north end of town.

**** Phase 1** of the Bark Park was scheduled for May but has been pushed back to this summer.

**** American Recycling** is doing a rate change for the city, City council discussed waiting on changing the city's fee to residents until water and sewer rates have been studied.

**** The city** will be getting estimates to fill the cracks and seal coating on Park Avenue through 5th street.

**** Council** approved the purchase of an 8 foot shredder to keep the lagoons and roadways mowed.

**** The Ordinance Committee** will be meeting to assess fines for overgrown yards, rubbish, etc.

**** The City of Peru** needs a place to store piping that we purchased for the water system improvements. They will be stored at Lincoln Winwater for \$7,000 a month for up to 6 months. The storage yard is insured and has security.

**** Council** has approved getting bids for the clean-up and removal of the nuisance property at 820 2nd street.

**** Council** has approved Resolutions that will start the public nuisance abatement of 600 5th St. and 320 California St.

Peru has set up a way for residents to pay water bills online and even set up Auto Pay! The new setup allows you to view water bills online, pay each month or set up auto-pay so you can set it up and forget about it!

You can currently sign up on the website (<https://www.perunebraska.org/>) ... The Drop box on "City of Peru" tab, then click online bill pay. The program will walk you through the steps. If you have any questions, please contact City Hall at 402-872-6685.

Directions will be in the next water bill mailing as well!

Transportation for all Peru Residents

by Angela Allgood

The Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging offers transportation to all Peru residents and college students!

They offer transportation on a weekly basis, usually every other Thursday, to shop at Walmart. You may go other places but each place you stop at is an extra cost.

They also offer trips to Auburn, usually on Mondays.

Please call Dawn at the Blue Rivers Public Transit office in Auburn at 402-274-5365 with at least 24 hours in advance or call the Friday before to schedule the trip.

The term (usually) means that if they have a driver, they will do the trip. Dawn has mentioned that they are short on drivers, so if anyone has time and would like to earn a little extra money driving, again, please call Dawn at the above phone number.

Great news! You can now sign up for alerts from the City of Peru! If you are interested in signing up for these text message alerts, directions will be on the City of Peru website page. You can also watch for the information in your next water bill!

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See page two for contact information.



Northridge Church

Pastor Daniel Hutchison

Services at Peru City Hall Sunday 10 am



Peru Community Church

520 Nebraska Street

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

OLD STONES

The letters are flocked with lichen, and the white marble slab is leaning way too far to stay upright. Soon a mole will burrow a crooked tunnel under the last corner that is solid, and the memorial will fall into the grass. But the soldier who sleeps forever will be resting there tomorrow. You never met him, but he knows you're at his grave. If he could talk in words that you can hear, he'd say, "Thanks to you for thinking about me, and how I came to be here. My life wasn't all that long, but now time is all I have and I can see into eternity."

MAY DAY

Doorbells ring and knockers knock, but no one's there until you spy a sneaky body hiding but not hidden by the tree. It's a spring spook who is running house to house, leaving pretty posies at front doors. Kids of all ages have of folded, cut, pasted and painted paper into small and perfect baskets to hold precious spring flowers for their neighbors. You call them out and they come running so the smiles can be shared and remembered for all the days to come!

SPRING vs. SUMMER

Pray for May, and if you do that, it might work. But calendars and our weather seem to have gotten some kind of divorce in recent years. What would a judge rule in a case of Winter vs. Spring, or April vs. July? Who gets a settlement when temperatures rise out of control three months before we expect them? What if a hard freeze spoils May, and kills all the flowers? Who pays for damages from lost fruits and berries? Santa?!! Some sanity should prevail, at least in the case of fragrant breezes and soft green grass under our bare feet. There must be a law that says people and other critters deserve a rest from the constant stress of "what will happen tomorrow?"

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with the flavor of rural America.

SCHOOL IS OUT!

But not forever: sometimes we never stop to think that school is every day and for always. Graduation is a gown and a party and a piece of paper, but that's when real life starts, and school can seem like it was an idyllic island in a dream. Now the graduates are back to square one again, and life may look like a big casino, with lots of bets to make without any clue if they will be winners or losers. The secret to that is the fact that true learning happens when you lose and have to start again. And that's when it's good to realize that winning can mean finding something good in every day.

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PEONIES IN BLOOM

As May ripens into June, peonies become the center of the fragrant universe. To gaze into the swirled center of a mass of velvet petals, as a haze of perfume invades your senses, is to touch the edge of heaven. It's only fitting that the blooms come only for awhile, like Angels dancing on a thunder cloud. Life would be too rich to endure if such splendor was here all year. So spend the precious days of delight soaking up the sights and scents before a hard, cold rain comes to hammer the flowers into the ground.

Life Is A Ride; Eat Cake!

Dorothy Rieke, Julian

A few weeks ago, we were in a restaurant to eat. A sign on the wall read, “Life is a ride. Eat cake!” The sentiment of that sign grabbed my attention. Did it mean that we should live for the moment?

I truly doubt that’s the meaning intended. Truthfully, life is wonderful. Of course, that statement is based on our expectations, our outlooks, our attitudes, our beliefs, and our goals.

Sometimes our expectations do not work out. Sometimes, difficulties enter our lives. At times, we have disappointments. Our friends fail us.

Of course, when we were young, we envied adults thinking it would be awesome to be older. But as adults, we realize life is not always “fun and games.” When younger, our parents helped us over the obstacles. Now, as adults, few bother to remove those problems.

What are suggestions for “eating cake?” Have a good attitude toward life. Life is really what you make it, with your decisions and goals. Take full responsibility for your life. Make the right things happen.

If you see someone who needs help, just give that help without expecting anything in return. You will feel better for your actions.

Avoid instant gratification eating the wrong foods, buying things not needed, doing drugs, or wasting your time. Instead, fill your life with simple things. View a beautiful sunset, gaze over a crop field ready for harvest, see the beauty in the farmsteads along our roads, and above all, take time to dream.

Realize that failures and disappointments do occur. Recover and do the best you can with what is left. Failure often brings knowledge. We learn through failure.

Write a short message to someone who helped you recently. This helps you and encourages the other person to continue with good acts.

Think of something in your life that you are grateful for. Think of what it adds to your life and be thankful.

What you think, you become. The unique combination of desire, planning, effort, and perseverance will always work its magic. We can all go wherever we want, to be from what we are now, provided we believe in ourselves and have courage.

A wonderful life eating “cake” can be ours working with our own actions and desires.

Window On Fifth Street

Stephen Hassler, Peru

When daydreaming through my window on Fifth Street, I sometimes think about the old farmhouse that was once a wonderful world for me as a teen and pre-teen. Half the upstairs was “my room.” The back yard had a tree that was easy to climb, and the yellow rose bush and lilacs bloomed fragrantly each Spring.

Sometimes the mind is like an old house; broken windows and hanging doors, but rooms full of memories; visions of children running around after school, smells of holiday dinners, sounds of pouring rain, views of blowing snow, blooming roses, and falling leaves.

These days I realize such happenings are over my shoulder, as there are more years in that direction than to where I’m heading. I often plan ahead, but now and then I think back, all the way back to as young as I can remember. I don’t know why I reach so far back in time. Why always my childhood? There are so many other periods in my life that are memorable; as a young man there were great times playing touch football with “the guys” on a weekend, having love surprise me at an evening dance, my road trips to one coast and then another. Mountains, deserts, oceans.

Sometimes I wish I could thank that little guy who once was me, for trying so hard, and apologize to him for not fulfilling his dream and making it to NASA. He did his part; elementary grades in a one-room country school, high school homework as a nightly struggle, getting into college without any grants or scholarships, just \$115 from his aunt and a 2-hour-a-day-job cleaning dishes in the men’s residence hall. But after college, life interrupted “plans.” How much fate took a role in that redirection, and how much job search entered into it, I can’t say for sure, and it’s probably not important any more, if it ever was.

Now I’m content with my photography, my occasional piece of writing, and laying out pages of “Your Country Neighbor” month after month. Pieces of this rural life, through my window on Fifth Street.

Still I am urged to turn around now and then and look back. I try to stretch time as if it were an elastic band, and reach into the murky past for forgotten images. For the most part I manage to avoid thinking about “what might have been,” and focus on “what is and what can be.” Over my shoulder is the foggy road of memories and the twists and turns of life. Forward is reality, winding down that misty road into the future, far beyond that old house with roses and lilacs.

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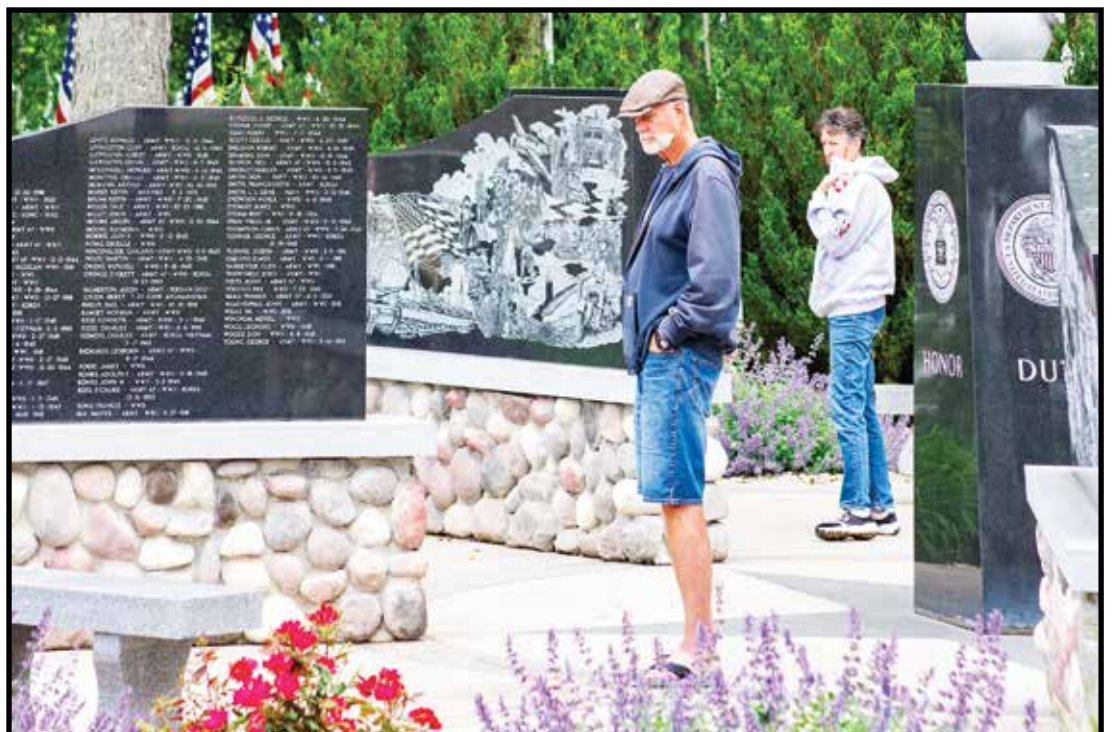
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<<<<< **Frieda's Old Maid Hill Continued from page 5**
Sylvia's father says they're from a church down on Hickory Street, and they're rebuilding, so they're meeting here for a while. But it's a church, all right."
"Mumzy and Daddy wouldn't let me go!" said Old Maid Hill, looking almost alive as she thought about it.
"Oh well, yeah, they might," I told her. "I heard you cough one day when I went down the alley. Miz Scott said that old Mr. Scott died of The Consumption a couple of years before we moved here— did you know him? People say that Consumption is real catching, maybe even from across the street— maybe you caught it, and maybe you need to go and pray that it won't take you away? Lots of people go to church to pray for miracles— if they were afraid of losing you, maybe they'd let you go."
Two weeks later Sylvia and Piggy and I were skating around the block. We were in front of the row houses and a man stood there looking around. He stopped us to ask hesitantly, "Young ladies, do you know if a family named Hill lives here?" I looked at him. His overalls were faded and rough-dried, but they were clean and he was clean and smelled like soap. His shoes were worn-down and patched, but his hair was combed carefully, and his face was clean-shaved. He wasn't exactly a Handsome Prince type, but he looked sturdy and dependable. I decided that I liked him. "Yes," I said.
He lit up with a smile and said, "And is there in the family a very nice young lady with a pretty face?" Piggy and Sylvia both started to shake their heads but I pinched their behinds and we all said, "Yes."
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."

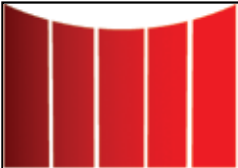
Frieda's Old Maid Hill to be continued next month.



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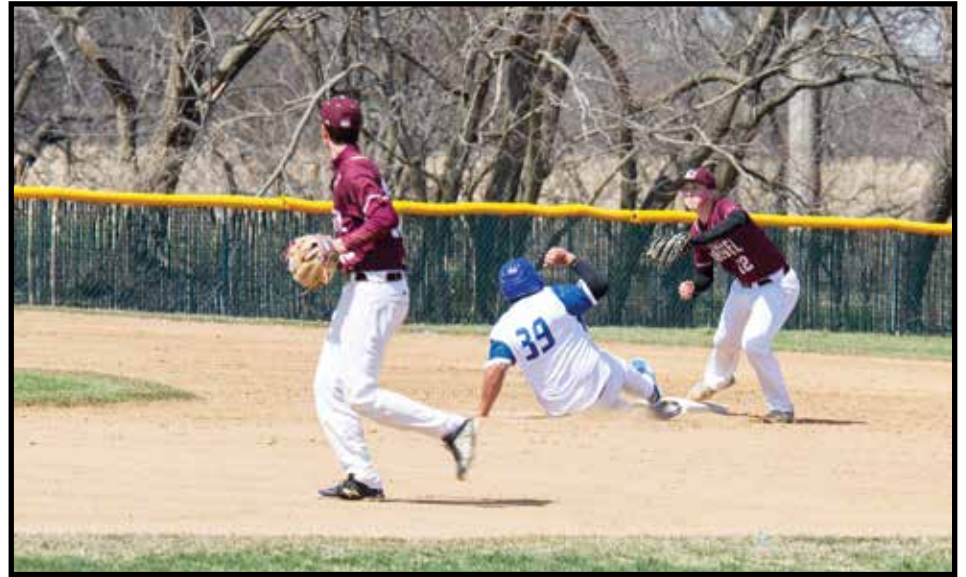
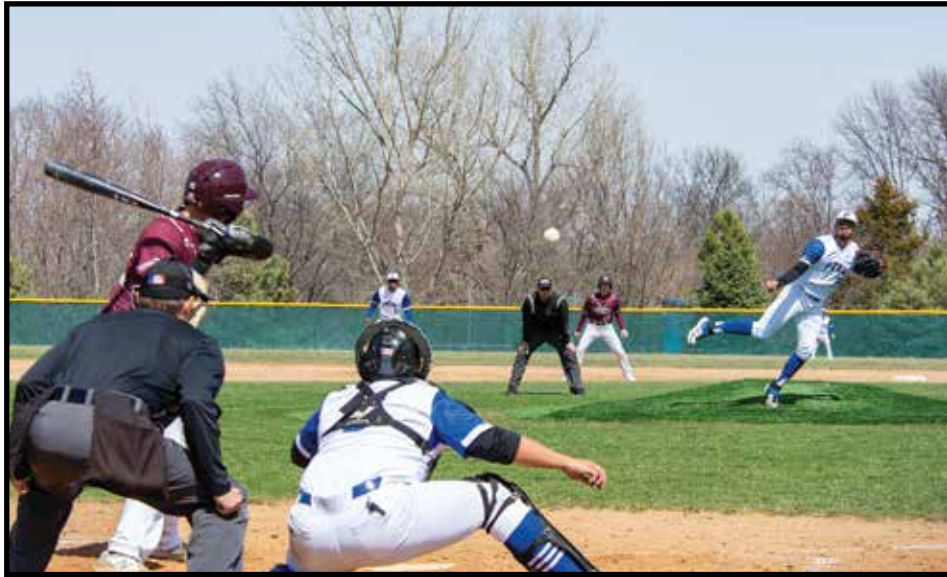


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Men's Baseball At Peru State, April 2022





Women's Softball At Peru State, April 2022



Peru State College News

Peru State Hires Phil Ockinga The 26th Head Football Coach

President Dr. Michael R. Evans said, “Coach Ockinga brings impressive experience in recruiting, retention, program development, and sideline coaching, and he is absolutely the right person to help the team continue its excellent trajectory. I’m looking forward to watching the team grow, gain skills and depth, and hit the field this fall ready to compete at a very high level.” Ockinga began his duties on Thursday, April 7.

Ockinga has spent the last five seasons with the University of South Dakota in various positions.

At USD, he started in 2016 as the Running Backs Coach/Special Teams Coordinator. During the 2018 season Ockinga moved over to Recruiting Coordinator and Wide Receivers coach. The last three seasons from 2019-2021 he has been the Assistant Head Coach/Recruiting Coordinator/Wide Receivers Coach.

This past season at USD the Coyotes went 7-5 overall and 5-3 in the Missouri Valley Football Conference. They made the 2021 FCS playoffs for the second time in school history. The first time was in 2017 while Ockinga was on the staff with Coyotes making it to the second round.

Ockinga has had a phenomenally successful tenure with the Coyotes in all positions he has held. In 2019 he signed the number one FCS prospect in the country. Ockinga also coached an All-Conference Punter in 2019 which led to being the number one team in net punting in the MVFC in 2019 with 42.6 yards net punting per game.

Ockinga has coached 15 players in the NFL most notably Alvin Kamara, NFL superstar running back now with the New Orleans Saints.

Ockinga earned his bachelor’s degree in physical education from Hastings College after transferring from the University of Wyoming where he began his career as a football player.

In addition to his bachelor’s degree, Ockinga earned his master’s in health and human performance from Fort Hays State. He and his wife Kelsie have four children, Miles, Blaise, Claire and Elle.

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.”

Dr. Michael Evans Inaugurated 34th President, April 20, 2022



Peru State College inaugurated Dr. Michael R. Evans as its 34th president on Wednesday, April 20, in the Performing Arts Center on the College’s campus. First Lady Joanna Evans looks on as Dr. Evans acknowledges the applause of attendees.

Evans holds a doctorate in folklore from Indiana University and he focuses his research on expressions of indigenous cultures through the mass media. With the support of a Fulbright Fellowship, he lived for nine months in a small village in the eastern Canadian Arctic, conducting ethnographic fieldwork with Inuit videographers. That project resulted in two published books. He has conducted similar work in the Australian Outback, working with Aboriginal video and radio professionals. He has worked in several Native American nations as well.

Evans will celebrate 40 years of marriage to First Lady Joanna Evans with a trip to Africa following Peru State’s commencement in May. They have twin sons: Dylan, who has a degree in outdoor education from the University of New Hampshire and leads kayak and rafting trips; and Miles, who has engineering degrees from Purdue University and Stanford University and is working as a solar engineering research scientist.

PSC Head Baseball Coach Wayne Albury Wins 800th Career Game.

Coach Albury is now the winningest coach in Peru State history. Congratulate Coach Albury on this outstanding achievement.

Jesus Tavares Earns Heart Baseball Player of the Week.

**Maddy Duncan, Basketball Team Captain &
Sidney Peck, Volleyball Team, named NSCA Strength
and Conditioning All-American Athletes of the Year.**

**Women’s golfer Taylor Finke and Men’s bowler Isaac
Skalak named Bobcat Athletes of the Month for March.**

**The Omaha World-Herald named Jibril Harris
To Basketball’s All-Midlands First Team.**

Find more about the remarkable people mentioned on this page.
Visit: peru.edu and pscbobcats.com

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