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A Magazine for Small Towns and Rural America





Peru State College Homecoming Football in the Oakbowl. Photos page 14.

PSC Homecoming King & Queen. Story on page 15.

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Your Country Neighbor

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

Guitar Poems

Steve Adams



Don't know Who he's pretending to be He ain't no native He ain't no family

He came from the east Or so I was told He's got that look And it's cold

He lives in a shack On the edge of town Ain't nobody down there Going to mess him around He's got that look And it's cold

He came from the east Lives on the edge of town Ain't nobody down there going to mess him around He's got that look He's got that look And it's cold

November Writers

Devon Adams Steve Adams Mary Ann Holland Merri Johnson Vicki O'Neal Janet Sobczyk Merlin Wright

Thank You!

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The Fascinating Man

By Janet Sobczyk, 2018

On vacation my husband, his brother, and I encountered the most fascinating person we've ever met. An internationally renowned artist whose original paintings have sold for millions of dollars. His tales of travel and his encounters with celebrities were spell-binding.

At first, we were skeptical. The stories were unbelievable. However, he encouraged us to google him, so I did. Right in front of him.

It was all there! His paintings, the book he'd illustrated, photos of him. We were drawn in, asking questions, amazed at his answers.

His stories of surviving a life-threatening illness as a child and overcoming a learning disability tugged at my educator's heart. His descriptions of growing up as a minority were enlightening. His encounters with nature and wild creatures on land he inherited explained the subjects of his paintings.

The most interesting stories were about movie stars and directors. About owning four helicopters, having a genius son that's an autistic savant, and a daughter who does makeup for stars in Hollywood.

We spent an enjoyable evening with him at a restaurant where he had planned to dine alone. He said, "I don't know why I'm telling you all of this. I usually don't talk much about myself." But we were a rapt audience. In the end he treated us like old friends with hugs goodbye and invited us to his studio. We agreed to meet him the next morning.

His studio was in the tourist town's main strip of stores. It was tiny and he explained the bulk of his life's work (at age 73) was housed in two warehouses: one nearby, and one in London. He showed us prints of his famous paintings and explained the stories in each one, pointing out hidden features in the scenery. He showed us ancient artifacts of his ancestors and a guitar that he'd used playing with a country music legend on tour. We spent a mesmerized hour with him before getting on the road for home, with his business card in hand.

On the drive we discussed things he'd said, and I googled some more. The next day I stopped by the library to check out the book he'd illustrated. It wasn't in the system so I requested it be ordered. They looked it up and let me know they couldn't buy it. It cost \$247 on Amazon. Whoa!

Continued on page 11 >>>>>>>



The Auburn High School Bulldogs played a night game in the PSC Oak Bowl.

Ge 1901

PSC Homecoming Parade, Peru, Nebraska













Caffeine Musings Merlin Wright

KITCHEN KRIMES There are some combinations of foods that just seem wrong. Do you like to eat sliced uncooked green peppers with one hand and plain cottage cheese from a bowl with a spoon using your other hand? A bit of sugar makes the cottage cheese better.

There is a seven layer salad recipe that calls for lettuce, onions, peas, celery, cheese, mayonnaise and crumbled bacon. Part of the pleasure of the salad is the visual appearance. The appearance could be improved with a layer of sliced boiled eggs between two of the green layers. It however, would be less appetizing with only green items. Imagine layers of lettuce, peppers, peas, celery, chopped onion tops, pickles and pickled green beans.

Just as pregnant women need more of certain nutrients, bicycle riders do also. It is good to eat something every ten miles. Darlene says it would be cheaper to drive the car. One common food for cyclists is bread and peanut butter. An item to add to the peanut butter sandwich might be a pickle or a banana. There is a cafe on South street in Lincoln that serves Gooberburgers. Peanuts are sometimes called goober peas and a grilled hamburger topped with one or two tablespoons of peanut butter is a Gooberburger. Peanut butter is also a tasty condiment for hot dogs. Another popular condiment for a hot dog is sauerkraut.

Most people have a fondness for strawberry jam added to a peanut butter sandwich. A good friend at church told me during coffee that she makes a good snack by spreading peanut butter on bread and then sprinkling on sugar and cinnamon. Looking at the ingredients listed on food labels is revealing. My jar of peanut butter has sugar as the second item. Another [don't knock it till you try it] additive for a peanut butter sandwich is.....ketchup. Ketchup also contains sugar. A bit of sugar makes it better.



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People who are concerned about eating wild animal meat should avoid meat dishes at pot luck dinners. There are numerous hunters in southeast Nebraska who enjoy feeding people something such as groundhog that is similar to beef. There is an old retired school teacher who tells a story of how good tasting are House Sparrows when fried in butter. The cook at the school in Potter, Nebraska made chili using kangaroo meat but did not tell the students before they ate it and the cook does not work there now.

Thank you to a friend for the squash which was actually a spaghetti squash. Thanks to the internet for instructions on how to make it edible. No, I don't want another. Just because it had long fibers that looked like spaghetti does not mean it tastes like that nor does it mean you should put pasta sauce on it. Brown sugar and butter has a good flavor and is a great way to eat even cardboard.

Until next month, keep the coffee perking. A bit of sugar makes it better.

Civil War Reenactors, Brownville, Nebraska Autumn Days, October 13, 2108

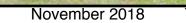


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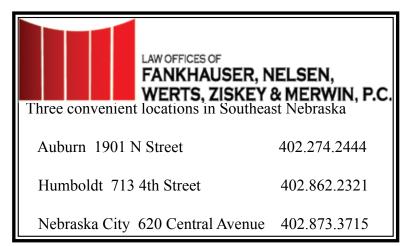
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Poetry by Devon Adams

HELLO YELLOW!

Winter is coming on a fast train from Santa's back yard, and evenings are dark sooner every day, not to mention the late mornings. which are hiding under the covers until they are forced to show themselves through breaks in the low, gray clouds. So, in retaliation, I bought sunshine bright paint. It isn't gaudy at all, not a flash that slaps at your eyes, but soft creamy butter that soothes the soul. When a lamp is lit, walls reflect the mellow and rooms feel like warm blankets draped on your shoulders.

WEEKEND WARS

They are all small nations, out there on the trampled turf. Their warriors go screaming into battle with blood pounding in their brains and destruction written in their faces. It is football season again, and time for all the couch platoons to prepare for battle with super snacks and drinks that come in liter bottles, or in smaller bottles, or in shot glasses. They will watch the teams on screen go through ups and downs and they will go up and down with them, with emotions at the limit of safety, blood pressures rising and tempers, joy and sadness seemingly out of control, until it's all over. Monday morning will come calling too soon, and battle will be suspended until next weekend.

MOUSE MOTEL

There is a crack in the back of the screen door that is just wide enough for a tiny gray body with a skinny tail to squeeze through. Due to oodles of rain, the wood had swelled and split. The first cold night, the mice realized it was time to move out of their cozy grass cave under the cedar tree. Mom and Pop and all their kids lined up the next morning and walked up the path to the house. With a wary eye out for the cat with his evil eyes, they checked out every inch around the foundation. Some old cracks were plugged with caulk, but then they found the door. They wiggled in and took a tour of the basement. "This'll do fine," Pop said. "We'll tell all our cousins and our friends about this cheap motel." And they did that.

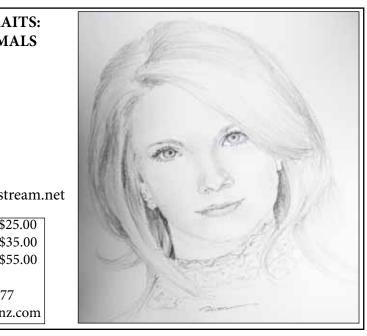
HARD FREEZE

Sometimes it comes early and kills flowers still lovely and full, or it comes late and has millions of leaves left to pick with icy fingers. It is confusing to cross into November when trees are still wearing autumn clothes, when grass is more green than brown, and when Halloween was warm enough for no jackets. But, sooner or later, it will come and remove any doubt that there will be a winter. And that will happen when it has slipped your mind to drain the hose, check the antifreeze, turn the rain gauge upside down, and pick the last of the roses. The ice accepts no excuses and refuses to reverse the damages.

PENCIL PORTRAITS: PEOPLE & ANIMALS Done from your photographs. Send to: Devon Adams P.O. Box 192 Peru, NE 68421 OR buckskinz@windstream.net 8x10 (mat size) \$25.00 11x14 (mat size) \$35.00 16x20 (mat size) \$55.00 Phone: 402-209-9377 Web Site: BuckSkinz.com

A LITTLE HOUSE

It is a two-story house with a tiny top floor on top of the second story. So it's really three stories. But the real story is about the people who live there. They have two cars that park in the garage behind the house. A big porch wraps around the front and side of the house, and it has three steps. The front door opens into a hall that leads to the stairs that go up to rooms for sleeping. Windows are like big square eyes, and floors are polished oak. There is a huge fireplace with a chimney reaching higher than the highest shingle. Then there are the little people who live on all these floors and step up and down the stairs. They wear bright colors and have joints in their arms and legs, but they are toys! The little girl who loves them makes them real.



DREAM WEEDS

After slogging through a long, hard day of work and play and wishing for more time to do more things, we fall asleep in the recliners in front of the TV sets. The sound is on, but it is invisible to our ears as we keep busy moving through fragments of thoughts and dreams that are not sleep and not consciousness. Elements of our day come into play and re-arrange themselves with memories from our childhoods, as parents and siblings and old neighbors mix with our current bosses and in-laws and friends. A confusing set of events is taking place as we become more and more haphazard in the journey through our brains. And then we come awake, or something akin to that. We are in the deep weeds grown from our own experiences and sometimes we can't fight our way out of them for hours and hours.





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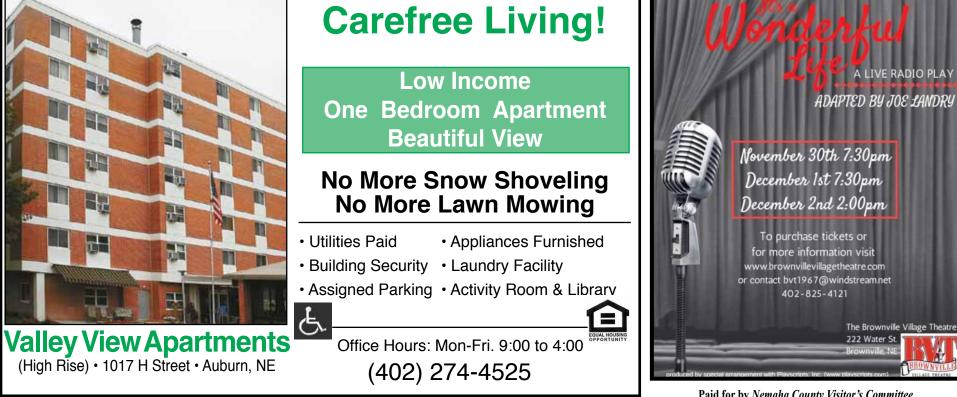


One of the varieties of Goldenrod.



Milkweed pod bursting in the dry air.





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Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

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As you know, I am a part-time housewife. So, that means I'm also a part-time "something else." For purposes of this month's column, I'm writing as a part-time volunteer on a City board in Auburn, Nebraska. I hope you don't mind if I enlist your help this month with a question I've been wrestling with as a member of that board.

I was recently involved in a conversation about community development. The phrase "sense of place" came up, as in small communities that project a sense of place are doing well. Apparently some survey or research has revealed that people who work in fields that permit them to live most anywhere, are choosing the place they want to live, and then finding a way to make a living in that place. Instead of locating primarily for the sake of a job, these people locate for the sake of the place.

Several small towns in Nebraska and Iowa were mentioned as examples of communities with a sense of place. It bears noting that at least some of these towns were once considered purely "rural," but, thanks to metropolitan expansion, they are now within commutable distance of the outskirts of Lincoln, Council Bluffs or Omaha. This is an advantage that Auburn does not have.

That being said, there is still potential for Auburn to project a sense of place. But first, one has to understand what that phrase means.

I figured the best way to assess Auburn's sense of place was to ask someone else's opinion. So, I said to Hubby, "Do you feel a sense of place living in Auburn?" Now, I knew before I asked that Hubby was going to need some sort of definition of that phrase in order to answer the question. But, how to explain it?

It's more than quality of life, which encompasses primarily material things like cost of living, availability of desirable housing, recreation and entertainment options, good health care and educational services, adequate shopping, and of course, jobs.

All of these things are generally considered necessary for an economically viable community. But how do they relate to a sense of place? To me, sense of place depends more on emotional or psychological appeal or on a natural or man-made environment that gives it a distinct character.

One need only look a few miles east to Brownville to see the difference between sense of place and those quality-of-life features mentioned earlier. This village of only about 150 people has natural beauty plus historical and artistic attractions, but very little else in the way of quality-of-life amenities. Brownville's assets generate economic activity and, perhaps more importantly, they drive community involvement and create a shared sense of purpose and belonging.

So, back to my question for Hubby. After doing my best to explain sense of place, he responded that he didn't think Auburn projected much of one. Hubby is a pretty concrete thinker so I suspect his response was tied to the physical appearance of the town. When I think of it that way, and take into consideration our downtown with its multiple empty store-fronts, I would have to say that the sense of place being projected is the sense of a dying place.

But, Auburn is not dying. We are holding our own population-wise and I think we would score fairly well on most quality-of-life measures. But, if remaining viable means getting on board with the trend of projecting a compelling sense of place, then we may have some work to do.

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CRESTVIEW SQUARE APARTMENTS





<<<<<< Continued from page 2

I emailed his website to thank him for the time he spent with us and to suggest that he get his stories written down, either as a biography or a memoir. An interesting reply arrived the next day from the manager of the website. She explained that she maintains the site in an effort to warn people who try to contact him that he isn't just an artist, he's a con artist, too. His work is not famous or valuable and he's bilked people (herself included) out of big money "investing" in his prints. And his amazing life is all made up.

Initially I was shocked, but then I thought, "Well, our first reaction was that his stories were unbelievable." And they really were! It just goes to show how an image can be created on the internet to establish credibility.

Two weeks later we're still amazed. We've told our friends and family about this encounter and someone asked, "How much did you get taken for?"

My husband replied, "Not a cent."

But truthfully, he never pushed us to buy. Maybe he could tell from getting to know us over dinner that we weren't good prospects. After all, our big purchase from that vacation was cherry pancake syrup and salt water taffy for the kids.

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Hosted by Mary Ann Holland, SHIIP Counselor

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or, conbe

Mary Ann Holland, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Educator Emeriti and trained SHIIP Counselor, will provide you with one-on-one assistance at the location of your choice. <u>Appointment required</u>—see contact number for each location. [Husband & wife **each** need an appointment.] <u>Additional SHIIP staff may be</u> <u>assisting at selected enrollment events</u>.



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Oct. 19	Tecumseh	Tecumseh Library	170 Broadway	9:00-4:30	402-335-3669
Oct. 23	Sterling	First National Bank	255 Hwy. 41	9:00-3:30	402-866-2050
Oct. 24	Weeping Water	Cass Co. Extension	8400 144 th St., Ste. 100	9:00-4:30	402-267-2205
Oct. 25	Syracuse	Otoe Co. Extension	620 1 st Street	9:00-4:00	402-269-2301
Oct. 26	Plattsmouth	Plattsmouth Library	400 Ave. A	9:00-4:30	402-267-2205
Oct. 30	Nebraska City	The Ambassador	1800 14 th Avenue	9:00-4:30	402-269-2301
Nov. 1	Pawnee City	Pawnee Co. Extension	Courthouse	9:00-4:00	402-852-2970
Nov. 2	Nebraska City	Southeast Com. College	819 Central Avenue	9:00-4:30	402-269-2301
Nov. 6	Nebraska City	The Ambassador	1800 14 th Avenue	9:00-4:30	402-269-2301
Nov. 7	Syracuse	Otoe Co. Extension	620 1 st Street	9:00-4:00	402-269-2301
Nov. 8	Weeping Water	Cass Co. Extension	8400 144 th St., Ste. 100	9:00-4:30	402-267-2205
Nov. 13	Auburn	Auburn Library	1810 Courthouse Ave.	10:00-4:30	402-274-4755
Nov. 14	Plattsmouth	Plattsmouth Library	400 Ave. A	9:00-4:30	402-267-2205
Nov. 15	Nebraska City	Southeast Com. College	819 Central Ave.	9:00-4:30	402-269-2301
Nov. 19	Tecumseh	Tecumseh Library	170 Broadway	9:00-4:30	402-335-3669
Nov. 20	Palmyra	Palmyra Senior Ctr.	425 C Street	9:00-4:00	402-780-5606
Nov. 27	Weeping Water	Cass Co. Extension	8400 144 th St., Ste. 100	9:00-4:30	402-267-2205
Nov. 28	Plattsmouth	Plattsmouth Library	400 Ave. A	9:00-4:30	402-267-2205
Nov. 29	Nebraska City	Southeast Com. College	819 Central Avenue	9:00-4:00	402-269-2301
Dec. 4	Syracuse	Otoe Co. Extension	620 1 st Street	9:00-4:00	402-269-2301
Dec. 5	Auburn	Auburn Library	1810 Courthouse Ave.	10:00-4:30	402-274-4755
Dec. 6	Nebraska City	The Ambassador	1800 14 th Avenue	9:00-4:30	402-269-2301

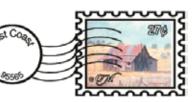
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Your Country Neighbor

Old Home Place 390 Memory Lane Lost Coast

A Gem of a Story -- Unbelievable, but True!

By Vicki O'Neal



(The story so far....I met a tough prospector gal on the West Coast, and we soon became friends. Things became more complicated when Diane found an amazing rock while prospecting. The stone turned out to be a gemstone-a rare Emerald with fossils inside. But getting the stone "certified" proved to be more difficult than we imagined.)

The Smithsonian Institute showed great interest in our photos of the Emerald-which made Diane and I feel ecstatic-but soon Diane and I ran into a streak of bad luck!

Diane got slammed in the head with a heavy trunk lid, giving her a mild concussion. Meantime, I got T-boned in my car while turning into a parking lot. One side of my Honda got crunched. It's a miracle that the car was still drive-able, but the thing looked like Heck!

Needless to say, our mishaps threw us for a loop, but soon we got back on track.

"Don't worry about your car!" Diane said. "We'll get you another car when the Emerald sells. In the meantime, we've got to head for southern California to the biggest Gem Institute in the country! The Emerald has to be certified before we can show it to the Smithsonian or anyone else! We've got to go to SoCal, Vic!"

Now folks-traveling through heavy LA traffic was not what I wanted to do! Driving a crunchedup car with a "priceless" fossilized emerald-taking it to the most affluent Institute in America was the last thing I wanted to do! What risks we were taking!

I spent an hour crying about it before I finally made up my mind to go. I dreaded the trip-but there was no way around it.

Diane and I set out late in the evening since it was the only way we could avoid the heavy Los Angeles traffic. At two o'clock in the morning, I drove through LA while Diane snoozed in the back seat. I maneuvered between big rigs and caffeinated Californians, sweating my way through the heavy construction that plagued 6 lanes of Interstate.

It was dreadful for me, but Diane slept through it all.

Somehow, my smashed-up car survived the trip, and we arrived at our destination about 8:30 in the morning. The Gem Institute was huge and scary. It was ringed by guard houses, locked gates, electric fences and unsmiling guards. Diane wasn't intimidated in the least. She never is.

As soon as we pulled up to the guard house, Diane immediately jumped from the back seat-popping out like a jack-in-the-box.

The guard looked so startled, he nearly drew his gun. "Get back in the car!" he barked. "Get back in the car!" He was dead serious. Diane complied with his instructions, but wasn't happy about such treatment.

Things only got worse when we walked into the gleaming halls of the towering edifice. The Security was as tight as Fort Knox-and for a good reason! This place was full of magnificent treasures!...Gemstones and gold and diamonds that beggared the imagination.

It made me feel small and scruffy-but not Diane! She was in her element. As a hardened prospector, she wasn't about to be intimidated by anyone! She marched up to the front desk and let her presence be known!

The officials on duty looked at us skeptically like we'd crawled out from under a rock—and by now, we certainly looked like we had! They immediately began giving us the run-around, which only made Diane more prickly. They weren't taking us and our precious gemstone seriously-that was obvious! We were just hicks from the sticks with a chunk of "green glass", and they had no time for us!

But finally, they began to cooperate. Diane made sure of that! They took photos of our I.D's. They made us sign paperwork....They took our pictures and put badges on us. Then they marched us here and there. Up and down stairs...taking us behind locked doors.

More guards with guns. More security checks. More cameras following our every move. Everyone eyed us narrowly as if we were Bandidos who had come to rob the place.

We soon grew weary of it all-but the greatest insult came at the end of our journey to the top floor. After a great deal of rigmarole they handed us an envelope containing the stone's 'Analysis' and sent us on our way.

We stared at the 'Analysis' in dismay and astonishment. These "experts" had hardly glanced at the gemstone! They were calling it "Manufactured Glass". They had done NONE of the required tests for which we'd paid \$200!

The "certificate" was basically blank-which showed us how very little they thought of us or our Emerald.

We were livid. But how could we argue with anyone as prestigious as the Institute? We were back to square one, and had no idea what to do next.

We finally left the Institute and went to a nearby mall. We walked into a Jeweler's shop. There, we received a warm reception. The people there put the gemstone under a microscope and were instantly fascinated. They said the gemstone had all the requirements of an Emerald. The ancient fossils inside the stone were obvious to anyone who took the time to examine it closely.

They were so kind. The people at the Jewelry shop assured us that the Institute had failed to do an adequate job, but unfortunately, the Institution had the final say in "Certification".

Diane and I got back in the car and drove home, filled with conflicting emotions. What else could we do?

Within the next few weeks, Diane got a hold of several people from a prestigious museum in the Midwest, and they took an interest in the Emerald. Soon, they contacted the Institute in Southern California, and that's when the sparks began to fly.

By the time it was over, the President of the Institute apologized to Diane for not doing adequate research on the Emerald. He offered to test the Emerald again for free, but by then Diane was too fed-up with them to comply. She wanted nothing to do with the Institute!

So now, folks-to make a long story short-Diane is off on new adventures, taking the Emerald to places far and wide, planning new escapades in California.

And as for ME? Well-you won't believe it, but this ol' Midwestern gal has finally come home to Nebraska after a full decade on the West Coast. I'm home to stay!

I've got another car, now, and I'm back in the Barada Hills for good. I'm with my kinsfolk and all that is near and dear. I treasure them now more than ever!

The season is changing, folks, and the Barada Hills are aglow with gold and all kinds of colorful "gems". Emerald green, interspersed with topaz and the golden hues of ash trees, oaks, and cottonwood. The fiery blaze of English Ivy and Staghorn Sumac. They are a wonder to behold! Their beauty rivals every sparkling gem in the finest Jewelry Box!

Folks-although I've traveled far and wide and have seen unbelievable things in the last decade... Although I've had many adventures that others can only dream of ... And although I've nearly died more than once on my long and arduous journey... I'm glad to say that I've survived it all and made it safely home again!

And you know what? I've found the old saying to be so very true... "There is absolutely no place like Home!'

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November 2018 Your Country Neighbor



PSC Football, October 2018













Peru State Reschedules Grand Opening of Performing Arts Center

Peru State College has announced that its late October grand opening for the Performing Arts Center has been postponed until Spring 2019. The College has tentatively identified Friday, May 3, 2019, as the date of the rescheduled event.

Dr. Dan Hanson, president of Peru State College, wrote the campus community, "Recent record rains have made it clear the Sesquicentennial Plaza will not be completed in time. We would like to celebrate as a community when the project is fully completed."

Donors and key stakeholders were contacted about the change late last month. Postcards were sent to nearby residents in mid October.

Work continues inside the historic theatre. What will be remodeled into the Performing Arts Center was originally built in 1921 and the theatre retains the sweeping curves of the time period. The new addition includes a new main and second floor lobby, costume and props workshops, dressing rooms, a green room, new bathrooms and an extended stage.

The Sesquicentennial Plaza will also be added to celebrate the College's founding 150 years ago in 1867. The Plaza will host outdoor events and a *Cat in the Hat* bronze sculpture. The *Cat in the Hat* sculpture is in honor of the years of Dr. Seuss activities held on campus by Peru State education students.

New facades grace the western wall of the theatre. The facades, "Windows to the Past", were sculpted by Jay Tschetter. They reflect photographs gathered for the sesquicentennial book project, "Nebraska's First College".

Whipple and Boshart crowned 2018 Homecoming Queen and King

Emily Whipple (Lincoln, NE) and Dan Boshart (Wood River, NE) were crowned Queen and King of the 2018 Homecoming court during halftime of the Peru State College football game on October 6. The seniors were crowned by President Dan Hanson, First Lady Elaine Hanson and 2017's Homecoming queen, Nichole Osborn (Omaha, NE). The winners were elected by the Peru State student body.

Photo of Dan Boshart and Emily Whipple on page 1.

Emily Whipple is majoring in Middle Grades Education with a mathematics endorsement and a minor in psychology. She is Captain of the Women's Golf Team, where she was named a Google Cloud Academic All-America® and the winner of the Heart of America's Larry Lady Scholarship.

Other on-campus involvement includes serving as a resident assistant, a student-leader with Christian Student Fellowship, student-leader with Fellowship of Christian Athletes and past-president of the Peru State Education Association. Whipple is also a Student Ambassador, member of Campus Activities Board (CAB) and the Student Athletic Advisory Council. She is a member of the Alpha Chi National College Honor Society, the Kappa Delta Pi International Education Honor Society and the Phi Chi International Honor Society of Psychology. Whipple's future plans are to graduate and become a middle school math teacher. She is the daughter of Eric and Laurie Whipple.

Dan Boshart is majoring in Social Science Education. He is a member of the football team and was named Heart of America Athletic Conference's Dr. LeRoy Walker Champions of Character award winner. Boshart is also a semifinalist for the 2018 William V. Campbell Trophy. He was also the only Heart Conference nominee and the only Nebraskan nominee to the 2018 Allstate AFCA Good Works Team. He will be a two-time Daktronics-NAIA Scholar-Athlete. Boshart is presently serving as the president of the Student Athlete Advisory Council and is also a leader in Christian Student Fellowship and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Boshart's future plans are to student-teach next fall, begin his teaching career, and someday to start a family in central Nebraska. He is the son of Craig and Karla Boshart.





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