

Your

*Country*

Neighbor

Free! Take 2  
and Share!

November 2020

Auburn • Brownville • Cook • Falls City • Johnson • Nebraska City • Peru • Rock Port • Sabetha • Syracuse • Tecumseh







Homecoming was a Winning Day    Towboat (Pusher Tug) Pushing Barge Near Missouri River Bridge 10/15/20

A Magazine for Small Towns & Rural America

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

Cases “tested positive” for Covid-19 in our “Country Neighborhood.” <small>Source: Google Search; ‘Name’ County, Nebraska Covid</small>				
Date	Nemaha	Otoe	Johnson	Richardson
October 3	135	181	70	61
October 11	147	215	81	74
October 17	160	247	89	82
October 24	164	287	98	95
October 31	171	327	113	125
<i>This table shows that these southeast Nebraska counties increased in Covid-19 cases through the month of October. November results, if available, will be presented here next month.</i>				

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# Your Country Neighbor

Voices and Views From the Valleys of the Nemaha

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

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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

## November Writers & Contributors

Devon Adams - 6 & 7

Stephen Hassler - 12

Merri Johnson - 10

Dorothy Rieke - 5

Janet Sobczyk - 11

Thank You!

## Covid Cases In Counties Bordering Nebraska

(Same Source As Page 1)

Date	Kansas		Missouri		Iowa
	Brown	Nemaha	Atchison	Holt	Fremont
October 3	145	136	61	84	138
October 11	167	179	68	95	164
October 17	190	242	70	103	177
October 24	212	285	75	113	194
October 31	258	357	82	123	217



Formed in response to the historic 2019 Missouri River flooding in Nebraska, the Northeast Nemaha County Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG) is assisting with flood recovery and laying the groundwork to improve the area's resiliency for response to future natural disasters. The nonprofit brings constituents together to coordinate efforts, communicate needs, and pursue funding to rebuild critical infrastructure with the goal of helping the City of Peru and surrounding region rebuild stronger.

“Following the devastating floods in March 2019, FEMA predicted that recovery could take several years to complete,” said David Pease, Mayor of Peru. “Our community has suffered an estimated \$7.91 million in economic loss, including \$4.2 million in agricultural revenue losses due to levee damage. The area also suffered damage to roads, water & wastewater infrastructure, as well as lost income from out-of-state tourists.”

The recovery group hired Deborah Solie as their full-time Disaster Recovery Coordinator. In her role, Solie is assisting the City of Peru with their disaster recovery projects, which will identify and administer grant opportunities to advance disaster recovery, and provide outreach to residents, businesses, and other organizations. This position is grant funded.

While Solie is new to the recovery group, she is no stranger to Peru or southeast Nebraska, having previously worked for the Peru State College Foundation and most recently for non-profit organizations in Brownville.

“While much has been accomplished,” Pease continued, “much work remains to be done. Although the flooding changed our landscape, it did not alter who we are. Peru is the embodiment of Nebraska Strong, and the LTRG is helping lead the way with recovery efforts to rebuild our community.”

About Our Group: The Northeast Nemaha County Long Term Recovery Group brings constituents together to coordinate efforts, communicate needs, and pursue funding to rebuild critical infrastructure and strengthen the City of Peru and surrounding region in disaster recovery.





Towboat Approaching Missouri River Bridge.



Windmill Along Highway 67  
The Summer Gown changes Color, October 13, 2020.

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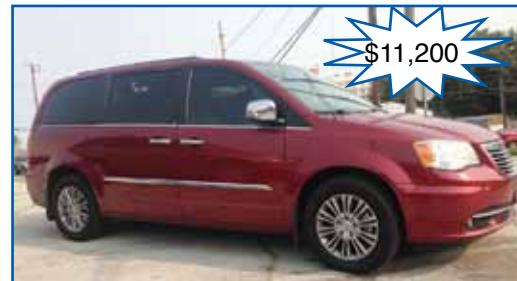
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Nebraska reimposes some public health restrictions as COVID-19 cases soar.

**COVID-19 is spreading in Nebraska**  
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**Avoid the Three Cs**

**1. Crowded Places**




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

**2. Close Contact**




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

**3. Confined Spaces**

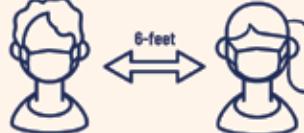


Avoid enclosed spaces with poor ventilation.


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WHEN YOU SPEND MORE THAN 15 MINUTES WITH OTHER PEOPLE ...



Avoid crowded places and limit time in enclosed spaces.



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



Wash your hands often.

Version - October 15, 2020

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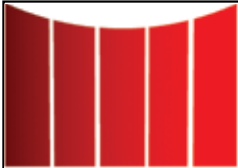
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Red-bellied Woodpecker  
A frequent visitor to my bird feeder.



## Thankfulness At All Times

Dorothy Rieke, Julian

Experiencing the real significance of Thanksgiving requires thought as well as practice. Our feelings of gratitude and appreciation must be expressed in genuine and powerful ways to reinforce the beauty of life, especially during the Thanksgiving season.

Gratitude, a form of thankfulness and appreciation, originates in the heart. Taking time to reflect on blessings and experiencing the magic of appreciation for blessings, defines the word gratitude.

Expressing our gratitude influences others to delve into their lives for their own blessings. In addition, gratitude, in its best form, opens doors for generosity and caring.

Another side of gratitude is sharing. Expressing our love for others and giving love means hearts are open to share. In fact, love promotes giving which nurtures spirits in loving ways. Sharing makes individuals kinder, gentler, and more patient. Kind, sympathetic individuals are known for their compassionate acts.

Experiencing gratitude during the good times is generally easy. However, maintaining that good attitude during bleak days often becomes difficult if not impossible. However, those darker hours teach us important concepts. The following lists traits built while facing difficult times;

- Trials teach perseverance
- Injustice teaches fairness
- Arrogance teaches humility
- Betrayal teaches loyalty
- Torment teaches mercy
- Scorn teaches honor
- Loneliness teaches fellowship
- Need teaches charity
- Meanness teaches kindness
- Neglect teaches regard

During good times or bad, feelings of gratitude promote love for others. Thankfulness, forgiveness, and generosity become primary in our lives. Because gratitude focuses on what is good in life, its joy spreads throughout your years making life a wonderful experience.

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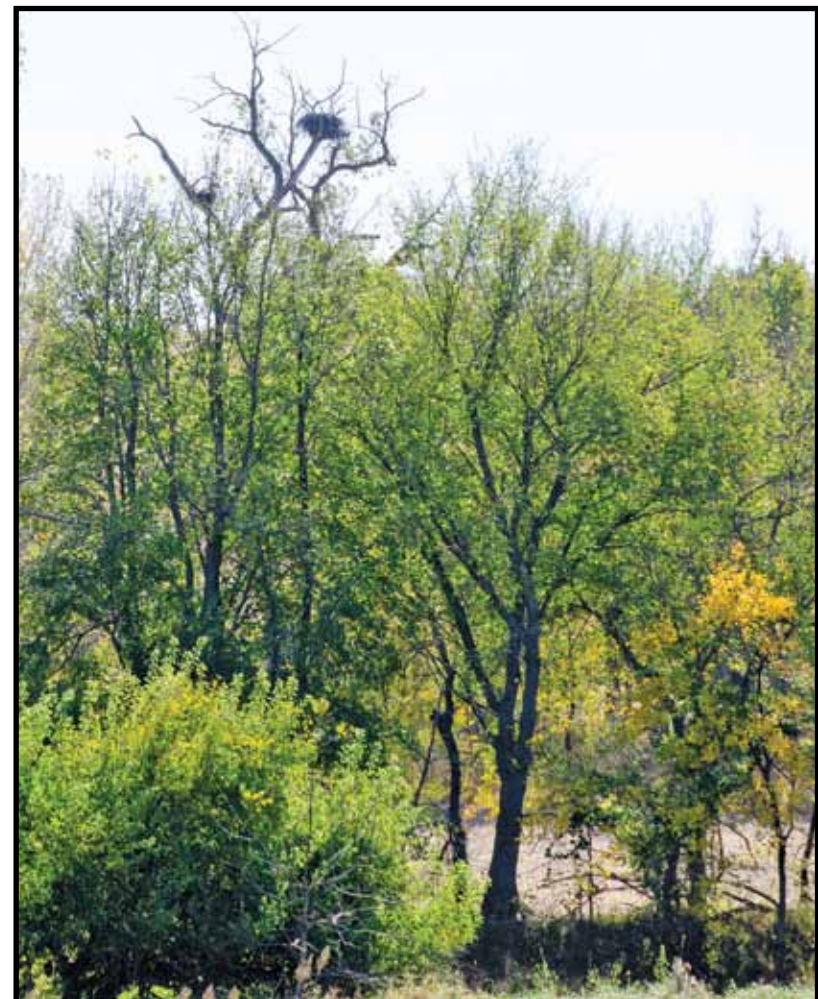
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“Vacancy” Bald Eagle’s Nest near Rock Port, 10/15





# Happy Thanksgiving

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#### FLOOD CORN

From the top of the hill to the bottom by the rolling river, rain fell, and fell some more. And the river rose, and rose some more, until the view was water bluff to bluff, flood for months on end, until the land seemed dead and forever fated to be drowned. Then the next spring the water dried, and the ground was lonesome and the farmer planted corn and it grew all summer into fall. And now it's ready to be picked, just like in the past. But the house and sheds and barn are gone, strangled by the water and the mud and sand. It wasn't a bad dream after all. It was real.

#### PLAN AHEAD

With wacko weather warming and waning, cooling and frosting, heating and drying, and breaking records, who can circle a date on a calendar page and expect that it will be what it should be? Build a fire on the grate to keep warm on a snowy day, before we eat turkey cooked in the oven? Or, plan a picnic on the patio to grill all the summer specials we missed in June because it rained the whole weekend? Or, be ready to open cans when the power goes out in the ice storm and the company can't come? A day of celebration is what you make it to be, and being thankful for what you have is better than wishing for what you don't have.



Nuthatch with black oil sunflower seed about to launch to a limb and break open its seed.

## COUNTRY LIVING

Great grandpa was a young man, helping his dad build this big house. Families were large then, and ten kids grew up in the drafty place, huddling near the wood stoves in the kitchen and the living room, freezing in the bedrooms upstairs. Sleeping on the porch and in the barn loft was some relief on hot nights in summer. Then it was a lonesome house, after the children were grown and gone. But one came back home and the house laughed for another generation. And now it's a busy place again, with bats in the rafters, mice in the walls, raccoons in the kitchen and opossums in the bedrooms. Swallows make mud nests on the ceilings and light fixtures. Snakes live in the basement. Foxes have a den under the front porch, and cats visit when they want to get out of the weather and chase mice for snacks. A nice cross-breeze blows through broken windows, as all the children laugh and play in the big house.

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

## DO DROP IN

It isn't a fancy hotel and it doesn't take up much room, but once you go there, you won't be able to forget it, even if you try. Set in a tranquil valley next to a back road, peaceful might be your first thought, as you look at the structure. If you arrive early in the morning, fog might be a soggy ghost, as it swirls and twirls around the sturdy wood foundation under the construction. In a flash, sun fingers search for sparkles, and find them collected as water droplets glittering on a net of shimmer that is a silky spider's web. Spun from branch to branch, it is more than beautiful. It is the final destination for insects who have been invited to stay for dinner whether they want to or not, as their host serenely eats them, one by one.

## A CALL TO ARMS

They are the silent armies of the past, who fought to save our country and our freedom. They won, because we're still America, but the lethal battles took a toll in blood and death, and in the hearts of those who lived to remember. Many couldn't leave the fields of fire, and fought the ghosts of fear that ravaged all their dreams. Others never talked to family or to friends about the hell they'd seen. They lived their lives long and well, and only on occasion shuddered. Stones are worn and faded for the soldiers who march no more. New fights must be fought for now, and for always. But the brave will be remembered.

## SNOW BLANKETS

I remember sleeping on new flannel sheets that were lovely and soft. Gradually, they wore down to thin and cold, like a favorite shirt that one day just falls apart at the seams from being worn so long. Winter snow blankets are just like that. The first one is like magic in its softness and its sparkle. But before that one is worn out, the next snow blanket falls, and so it goes, until Spring comes to collect the old laundry and put it in the washing machine. She will cut the old blankets into rags and give them to Summer to use until Autumn comes along to throw them out, so Winter can throw down brand new soft blankets.

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## Window On Fifth Street

Stephen Hassler, Peru

Weather is usually the first thing I observe when looking out my window on Fifth Street. Early October was very pleasant. The last Monday of October we received a good “dusting” of snow, not to mention temperatures in the 20’s. But, “this too, shall pass.”

I remember coming home to the Southwest Iowa farm on Thanksgiving break, my freshman year of college. I walked up the lane, from the farmhouse, over a rise toward the barn and other buildings to visit the rabbit pens. The leaves had turned; I suppose most were on the ground, but I remember the colors. I was wearing my Iowa State sweatshirt and it was at least 60 degrees.

Most of Iowa is in the same temperate zone as Southeast Nebraska, so I anticipate that there will be nice days this November, and in less than two months the days will begin to get longer and brighter right before Christmas, although that won’t be noticeable until January.

Already I’m looking forward to Spring. But I don’t plan to skip over Winter. With some snow I could still get some good photos; Cardinals and Jays at the feeder, Snow Geese at the wildlife refuge, and come January and February, Bald Eagles courting here and there in our 4-corners area. And frequently, snow brings those “Winter Wonderland” scenes.

Spring means I’ll be another year older too, but I’ll trade that time for a vaccine and freedom again. I’ll be more careful when it comes to washing my hands and socializing with sick people. And I’ll be glad when I don’t feel as if I need to wear a mask anymore, but I do plan to keep one around.

I hope I’m more enlightened as a result of Covid 19, and I hope I and my fellow citizens have become enlightened enough to avoid a Covid 21 (no Covid 20 so far). I sure wish I could see the future through my Window on Fifth Street, but at least I can see the past and learn from it, at least not repeat mistakes.



One of my best photos of a Red-bellied Woodpecker.



Another photo on a sunny day of a Red-bellied Woodpecker.



Red-bellied Woodpecker at my bird feeder.





# PSC Fall 2020 Photos

Homecoming Game  
30-17 October 3rd



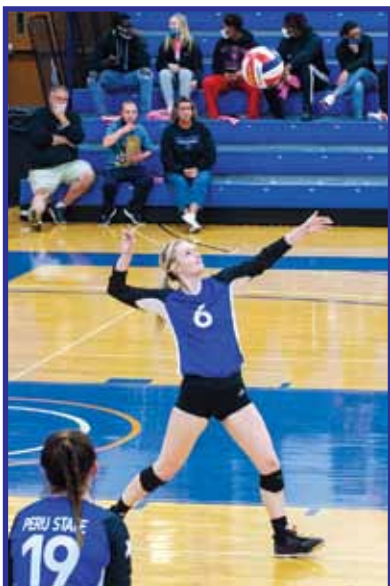
PSC over York, 73-72 October 28





# PSC Fall 2020 Volleyball Photos

PSC v Graceland, October 9 & PSC v Mount Mercy, October 16





# Peru State College News

## **Carlos Thomas Named Heart Defensive Player of the Week.**

Following Peru State's first win of the 2020 football season over Central Methodist (Missouri) on Saturday, October 3rd, a Bobcat football player earned one of the Heart of America Athletic Conference (Heart) weekly honors.

Junior defensive back Carlos Thomas (Gulfport, Mississippi) was named as the Defensive Player of the Week.

The Bobcats topped the Eagles 30-17 with a strong second-half performance for a homecoming victory.

Thomas finished the contest with eight total tackles – six of which were solo. He added three tackles for losses of 14 yards and had one sack. In addition, Thomas had two interceptions which he returned for 28 yards. Also, he forced one fumble which the 'Cats recovered.

## **Travis Reed Earns Heart Defensive Player of the Week**

For the second week in a row, the Heart of America Athletic Conference (Heart) Defensive Player of the Week was a Peru State Bobcat.

Senior Travis Reed (Hickman, Nebraska) earned the weekly recognition after his impressive outing against Benedictine (Kansas) on Saturday. Peru State fell to the Ravens in a hard-fought contest 31-27 in Atchison, Kansas.

Reed, a linebacker, finished the game with 15 total tackles – eight of which were solo.

A Heart second team all-conference player as a junior, Reed is ranked 32nd Nationally in total tackles (all positions) per game as he is averaging 8.7 tackles per game. In addition, he is 50th in tackles for loss per game (1.200).

Last week, Carlos Thomas (Gulfport, Mississippi) earned the weekly honor. This is believed to be the first time since Peru State has joined the Heart that they have had back-to-back defensive players of the week.

## **Homecoming King & Queen**



*Dr. Dan Hanson (far left) and First Lady Elaine Hanson (far right) with the 2020 Homecoming Queen Shianna Oestreich and Homecoming King Isaac Simpson.*

Seniors Shianna Oestreich and Isaac Simpson were crowned as the 2020 Homecoming King and Queen on Saturday, October 3, during the annual homecoming football game.

Shianna Oestreich is the daughter of Todd and Carla Oestreich. She is from Hadar, Nebraska. Oestreich is majoring in Disease and Human Health with a minor in Accounting. She participates in the RHOP Program in Physical Therapy, Alpha Chi, Intramural Supervisor-Referee, Club Volleyball, and is a Resident Assistant. She is also a Medical Lab Assistant and a CNA at Good Samaritan Society Nursing Home. Oestreich's future plans are to attend the University of Nebraska Medical Center in order to receive her Doctorate in Physical Therapy.

Isaac Simpson is the son of Jim and Tasha Simpson. He is from Papillion, Nebraska. Isaac is majoring in Elementary Education. On campus he is an active member of Peru Association of Student Athletes and he plays on the basketball team. In the future, Simpson plans to teach elementary school and coach high school athletics.

## **Code Blue Try-Outs Nov. 15 at Peru State**

The Peru State Bobcat volleyball team will be hosting try-outs for the "Code Blue Volleyball Club" on Sunday, Oct. 25, and Sunday, Nov. 15, in the Al Wheeler Activity Center on the campus of the College.

Code Blue is a grassroots junior volleyball club sponsored by Peru State College. Code Blue is affiliated with USA Volleyball and the Great Plains Region. Staff will consist of players and coaches from the Peru State volleyball program. Teams will practice twice a week (Friday and Sunday) and compete in four (4) single-day local tournaments within two hours of Peru

### **Try-Out Dates/Times**

On Oct. 25, from 4-6 p.m.: 10-14 age group

On Nov. 15, from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. – 15-18 age group, Make-up date for 14 and under.

To pre-register for the try-outs, email [codebluevolleyball@outlook.com](mailto:codebluevolleyball@outlook.com) with the player's name, birthdate and parent contact information.

Peru State Bobcat head coach Laurie Felderman is the club director and can be contacted at [lfelderman@peru.edu](mailto:lfelderman@peru.edu) or 920-639-5844 for questions. Code Blue administrators Nahum and Amy Winder can be contacted as well at 402-414-7440 or 402-414-7873.

Pre-registration is highly encouraged. If you cannot attend the try-out date, please contact the local club director or administrators.

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GPA of 2.70 out of 4.0

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