

Helping people notice beauty in the places they call home.

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Pioneers High School Marching Band--More AppleJack Parade Photos on pages 15, 16

Nemaha County Rodeo
Photo Right >>>>

More Rodeo Photos on 3 & 6

Your Country Neighbor
Helping people notice
beauty in the places they
call home.



Celebrating the Red, White, and Blue for PSC Homecoming

Get ready to break out the red, white—and, of course, Bobcat blue! Peru State College is preparing to welcome alumni, students, families, and friends back to Nebraska’s first college for Homecoming 2026, celebrating this year’s theme, “Red, White, and Blue – Coming Home to Peru.” With a full lineup of traditions, reunions, celebrations, and Bobcat spirit, Homecoming promises to be a memorable weekend filled with familiar faces, special moments, and plenty of reasons to be proud to call Peru State home. Reconnect with old friends, enjoy delectable food, the various entertainment, and revisit the place of unforgettable memories. Peru State College invites alumni, family, and friends to campus Friday & Saturday, Oct. 23 and 24, for Homecoming.

This is “Your Country Neighbor” Territory
Auburn • Brownville • Cook • Falls City • Johnson • Julian • Nebraska City
Nemaha • Papillion • Peru • Rock Port • Syracuse • Tecumseh • Verdon

Your Country Neighbor

Voices and Views from the Valleys of the Nemaha

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

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Thank You!

*“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead
where there is no path and leave a trail.”*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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

Maya Angelou

October

October won’t trumpet its arrival the way September does, but
it will quietly slip in with cooler mornings, darker evenings,
and touches of color spreading through the trees.

September may have left us with some beautiful reminders
of the season. The AppleJack Parade in Nebraska City is one
of them, and you’ll find several of my photographs from the
parade in this issue. By October, harvest is beginning to change
the familiar look of the countryside. Cornfields that seemed
endless through the summer will gradually open up, soybeans
are turning from green to gold, and the roads will carry the
familiar traffic of another harvest season.

The monarchs have been moving through Nebraska, too, fol-
lowing a route their ancestors have taken for generations to-
ward their Winter home in Mexico. By now, most have passed
through, leaving us with another reminder that the seasons are
always moving, whether we notice them or not.

There are still some autumn traditions ahead. “Old Time Au-
tumn” in Brownville returns this year, with the Civil War re-
enactors among the attractions. They don’t come every year,
which makes their return a little more special. If you’ve never
seen the encampment and activities, October may be a good
time to make the trip. See “Old Time Autumn” ad on page 4.

Closer to home, October brings Halloween, and before we
know it, Thanksgiving will be here. For those who like to get
ahead of the rush, Christmas shopping may already have be-
gun. Mary is preparing her Christmas shelves in her Auburn
store right now. The year has a way of picking up speed once
October arrives.

And somewhere in the middle of it all there will still be time
for the simple pleasures of Autumn—a drive through the coun-
tryside, a football game, an evening at home, or perhaps a stop
at Valentino’s for pizza. After more than a decade of appear-
ing in these pages, their familiar coupon is almost a part of the
rhythm of the year.

October isn’t an ending. It is the month when we begin to
notice that the year is turning toward its final chapters—and
perhaps appreciate a little more carefully the days that remain.

Welcome to October.



Lourdes Central Catholic Marching Band More Photos in *Arbor News*



Nemaha County Rodeo Photos on page 6



PSC Sports Photos on page 11

An Important Update on Pancreatic Cancer

A Public Service Announcement from “Your Country Neighbor”

Earlier this year, “Your Country Neighbor” reported on an experimental treatment for pancreatic cancer called daraxonrasib. At the time, the drug was showing encouraging results in patients whose cancer had continued to progress despite previous treatment.

There is now important news to report: the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the drug.**

On August 26, the FDA approved daraxonrasib, sold under the brand name Rasonque, for adults with metastatic pancreatic adenocarcinoma who have received at least one previous systemic treatment, or who are not candidates for combination chemotherapy.

The approval followed a clinical trial involving 500 patients. In that study, patients receiving Rasonque had a median overall survival of 13.2 months, compared with 6.7 months for those receiving standard chemotherapy. The median time before the cancer progressed was also longer—7.2 months compared with 3.6 months. About 30% of patients receiving Rasonque experienced a measurable reduction in their tumors, compared with 11% receiving standard chemotherapy.

The significance is not that pancreatic cancer has been cured. **This is not a cure.** Rasonque is approved for a specific group of patients with advanced disease, and it can cause significant side effects. Treatment decisions must be made by the patient's cancer-care team.

What has changed is that a treatment we previously reported as an experimental possibility has now crossed an important threshold. It has become an **FDA-approved treatment option for some people facing metastatic pancreatic cancer.**

For a disease that has historically been extraordinarily difficult to treat, that is meaningful progress—and another reason for hope.

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Saturday, December 5th

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(See details below in Historical Society ad)

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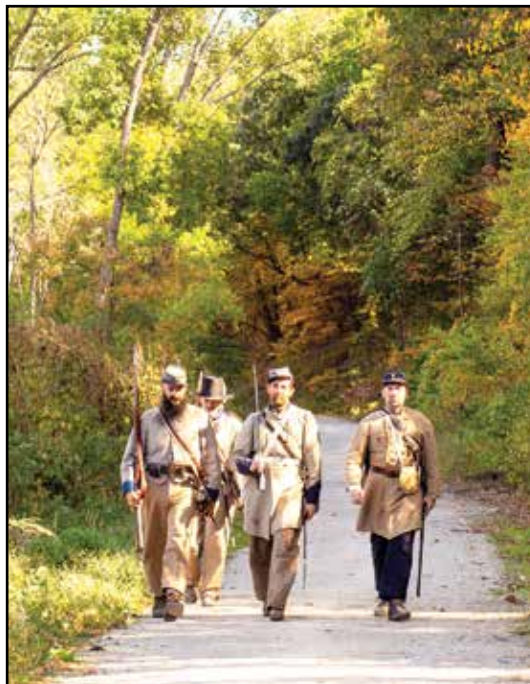
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Some reenactors marched to Peru in
a previous "Reenactment."

Brownville Historical Society

Old Time Autumn

Saturday, October 10
A Celebration of the Past

8:00 - 9:30

Cars, Carriages & Coffee

10:00 - 2:00

Museums Open

10:30

Civil War Reenactors on Main St.

12:00 - 1:30

Creamed Chicken over Biscuits

2:30

Battle by Civil War Reenactors
Sunday, October 11

Museums Open 11:00

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See Rodeo Bronc Rider On Page 1



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A Prairie Journal

October

October changes the countryside in ways that are easy to see. October opens the fields.

A field that looked solid and green a few weeks ago may now have rows of harvested corn, the stubble showing where the crop once stood. Soybeans turn from green to gold, and then, almost overnight, the combines begin to leave their familiar paths across the fields.

Harvest changes more than the appearance of the countryside. It changes the way the land sounds.

The steady movement of farm machinery becomes part of the October landscape. Trucks appear along country roads, grain carts move between fields, and the pace of work quickens whenever the weather provides a good day for harvesting.

For those who live in the countryside, these sounds are as much a part of autumn as the rustle of leaves.

But October is not only about harvest.

The trees along the creeks and roadsides begin their own transformation. Some turn yellow first. Others show orange or red. Some seem to hold onto their green until nearly everyone else has changed.

The prairie has always been a mixture of things happening at different times.

While farmers are bringing in crops, cattle are still grazing pastures. Gardens are giving up their last tomatoes and peppers. Birds are moving south, and the first cold mornings remind us that the growing season is nearing its end.

Soon, the open fields will look very different.

The tall corn will be gone. The soybean leaves will have fallen. The roads that seemed enclosed by crops all summer will open again, giving us longer views across the countryside.

There is something satisfying about that.

For a few months, the fields have hidden much of what lies beyond them. Once harvest is finished, the land opens up again, and familiar farmsteads, wooded draws and distant hills come back into view.

Perhaps that is one of October's quiet gifts.

The countryside begins to reveal itself again.

We notice the old windbreaks, the creek bottoms and the fences that disappeared behind summer growth. We see the shape of the land more clearly.

And if we slow down long enough to look, there is still plenty happening.

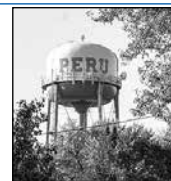
A flock of geese crosses the evening sky. A hawk waits along a fence line. Leaves gather beside the road. Somewhere a combine is still working as the afternoon light begins to fade.

October does not bring the prairie to a stop.

It simply changes the work being done.

The fields are being gathered, the trees are preparing for winter, and the wildlife is already looking ahead to another season.

The prairie is changing again. Not all at once, but enough that, if we pay attention, we can see it happening.



Let's Talk Education 2.0

John C. Chatelain, Omaha

Prior to the school consolidation movement, the map of Nemaha County was dotted with more than 80 separate school districts, the vast majority of them featuring the iconic one-room country school. North Center School (District #65), which stood along the east side of Highway 75 at the point where Highway 67 heads west to Brock was dissolved in 1960, becoming part of Auburn Schools (District #29).¹ The Center School building now ornaments the PSC campus, standing just south of the T. J. Majors building. According to the plaque on the building, the 1905 structure was disassembled brick by brick and reassembled in its present location in 2001. The gift to the campus was made by the PSC Omaha-Area Alumni Association.

The Peru Precinct alone had five districts. Tynon School (District #2), on the bottom north of Peru, closed in 1931. Indian Hill (#3) was the town school. Brush College (#4), located about two and one-half miles west, closed in 1953. Arab School (#14), southwest, ended in 1926. Honey Creek School (#15), located directly south of town, dissolved in 1956.²

The Indian Hill School building was constructed in 1870 on the imposing peak just west of downtown. According to folklore, it had been occupied by indigenous people. Presumably its height made it possible for them to sight approaching enemies. In 1897 an experiment in cooperation was undertaken whereby the children would attend the “practice school” on the Normal campus. The following year, taxpayers of the district met in a stormy meeting and voted to return the students to Indian Hill. As time went on, other children including the progeny of the college faculty, attended the laboratory school on campus. Competition between the schools inspired pride for both Indian Hill and the “Training School.” In 1952, another stormy taxpayer meeting resulted in the closing of Indian Hill School. The old brick landmark became a victim of time, progress, or politics, and in a few years came tumbling down.³

In the Spring of 1967, the Nebraska Legislature voted to close the Training School. “When I interviewed, I asked, ‘What about the elementary school?’” recalled newly hired college science instructor, Daryl Long, who had a son ready for kindergarten. The response, “We have the best elementary school in the country.” Liking what he heard about the campus school, Long took the job, but by the Fall, T. J. Majors was closed.⁴ The sad irony of these consolidations is that Peru, the earliest center of higher education in Nebraska, now has no elementary school.

For the January 2025 edition I wrote, “As the new-year opens, why not resolve to explore opening a grade school in Peru? . . . Imagine an institution held to the highest classical standards. There is no better place for educational innovation than a small college town, lacking an elementary school.” An article entitled, “The One-Room Schoolhouse Is Making a Comeback,” in The Epoch Times (August 19-25, 2026), caught my eye. Marlin and Lisa Miller are the founders of Juneberry Hill in Dundee, Ohio. Juneberry is a cooperative, which merges the home-school and one-room school models. According to Marlin, the co-op provides “structure, shared curriculum choices, and a place where kids of different ages learn side by side.” People are “looking for something like this where they can home school their children and give them a chance to learn alongside other kids from other families.” The Millers implemented their vision by moving a former one-room schoolhouse to their property. They formed a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, registered the school with the Ohio Department of Education and assembled a board.

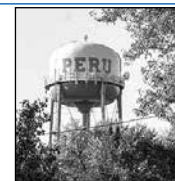
Nothing written here should be interpreted as a jab against the public schools, which are all doing essential work. But wouldn't it be nice if Peru had an elementary school? The story of Juneberry Hill is illustrative of the quaint old adage, where there is a will, there is a way.

¹ History of Nemaha County, p. 30; ² Ibid, pp 37-38; ³ Ibid; ⁴ Nebraska's First College: Shaping The Future Since 1867, p 142.

PERU CITY NEWS

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Tuesday Literary Club Reads

DiAnna Loy, Tuesday Literary Club

We are almost through our year of Celebrating the United States of America's 250th Birthday. Madara Holder chose to present *The Winthrop Woman* by Anya Seton this month. This book is an historical fiction novel about a real woman — Elizabeth Fomes Winthrop Feake Hallet. It begins in England in 1617 when Elizabeth is seven years old. She is the daughter of Thomas and Anne Fomes, but the family is ruled with a heavy fist by her uncle John. England is living through a time of tension between Puritans and Papists and John Fomes believes the family should live with the strictest Puritan values and norms. His punishments are swift and harsh.

As the book opens Elizabeth's family is traveling to Croton where her uncle John and his family live. They are to visit with her cousins, who she adores. Elizabeth, Bess as she is often called, is a beautiful child and in ways she has been coddled by her parents. While she is allowed a certain amount of freedom to range with her cousins, she is also expected to obey any command. Certain things are off limits and when she crosses the line, punishment is swift and dark. When she eats one of her uncle's special figs, which have been declared off-limits, she is beat with a rod until her back is bloody. Even with her harsh uncle, Bess enjoys her time with her cousins and fancies herself in love with her cousin Jack.

Back at home, Thomas Fomes is an apothecary and Bess works many hours in the shop. Plants and roots are often used, and Bess learns their uses and how to blend them to best advantage. Thomas is not a well man, and as he becomes more infirm, Bess runs the shop only going upstairs to ask her father's help as needed. As she has little social life, she is thrilled when her cousin Harry comes to town. She is soon stealing away from her responsibilities to spend time with him, growing ever closer. Until one day they steal away from the crowd and their affections go too far. Bess and Harry are soon to be married.

Moving on, it is 1631 and John Fomes decides his branch of the family is to emigrate to the new world. All arrangements have been made; there are three ships in all, Bess and Harry are going with them. Of course, Harry misses the ship that Bess is on and she travels alone to the new world. Harry follows on the third ship. All three ships arrive as expected but before Bess and Harry can be reunited, Harry has a freak accident and drowns; Bess must face the new world under her uncle's rule more than ever. John is not only the head of her family, but he is also the head of the colony. When Bess eventually remarries, her new husband is afraid to go against anything her uncle says.

In 1640, Bess and her new husband, Robert Feake, move to the Connecticut area and buy land from the Native Americans. They also establish healthy relationships with the tribe they bought the land from. At one point, Bess was able to heal one of the leader's legs and thus cement a positive relationship even during a later Indian uprising. Later, Mr. Feake developed severe mental issues and must return to England; deeding all their land to Bess. Bess is granted a divorce under trying circumstances that turn out to be against her best interests.

Bess is still a young woman, having a family and land to care for when William Hallet comes into her life. At least this man is one that truly cares about her. Bess and Will have many trials in their future and her cousin Jack comes to their aid more than once. Her own daughter turns against them.

The book *The Winthrop Woman* is worth the read and is available at the Auburn Memorial Library.

"Happy reading!"

A Southern Bloom in the White House

Sylvia Shires

If there is one American President's wife who has been judged cruelly by History, it is Mary Todd Lincoln. By the way, she never referred to herself as anything other than Mary Lincoln. Today, radical feminists like to claim her as one of their ranks, someone who felt oppressed because she was a woman, subjugated to her husband; but she was, in fact, the opposite. Her focus was entirely devoted to her husband and her children, as well as to the cause of abolitionism.

She was born in 1818 to a large, wealthy, slave-owning family in Kentucky. She was only 6 when her mother died. Her father remarried soon afterwards and more children were added. Despite the fact that Mary was never close to her step mother, she received an excellent education, spoke French, and possessed a great passion for and knowledge of literature. What was less common to women of her time in the South, Mary had a keen interest in politics and was a staunch opponent of slavery.

In 1839, she went to live in Springfield, Illinois, where her sister Elizabeth Edwards lived with her husband, Ninian. They belonged to Springfield's socio-political elite. It was at their home that Mary first met Abraham Lincoln, fell in love with him and agreed to marry him. Mary's family was in ardent opposition to their union, considering this struggling lawyer far too low socially for a southern aristocrat like Mary. Abraham described himself as "a poor nobody." He did get cold feet and thought he would marry another, but soon returned to Mary. They were married in 1842 in the Edwards' home; she was 24, he was 33. She was 5'2, he was 6'4, not counting the top hat!

Although very different in temperament, she could be as volcanic as he was poised, they shared many interests and were of one mind over the question of slavery. From 1844 to 1861, they established their home in Springfield, where Abraham was a circuit lawyer. Contrarily to rumors that have spread their corrosive tentacles through history, the Lincolns were very fond of each other. Research by historian Lois Romano quite debunked the notion that their union was not a loving one. Among others things, Abraham greatly appreciated how Mary could put guests at ease, saying, "My wife is as handsome as when she was a girl and I fell in love with her, and what is more, I have never fallen out." When he was chosen for the Presidency, he rushed home to tell his wife, "Mary, Mary, we are elected!"

They had both lost their mothers early and they were eager to create a loving family. Their life was painfully darkened by the loss of three of their four children, (one at age 4, another at age 12, and a third at age 18; this latter one had to be endured by Mary alone, when she was already shattered by her husband's death) and if that was not awful enough, they faced one of the most difficult periods of our country's history with four years of Civil War.

Difficulties assailed Mary from various fronts. The Northerners, at the very least, questioned her loyalty, and many even viewed her as a spy because she was from the South and several of her brothers

Continued on page 9 >>>>

<<< Lincoln, *Continued from page 8*

fought for the Confederacy. The Southerners despised her as a traitor, (six of her brothers were for the Union, eight for the Confederacy).

When she arrived at the White House, she was rightfully appalled by the state of the place: faded drapes, mismatched dishes, dusty, worn carpets, dingy and even broken furniture, peeling and stained paint and wallpaper, not to mention ubiquitous filth and even rats!

For the Victorian woman, the Home Sphere was her domain and Mary was a true Victorian woman: a wife, a mother, a homemaker. She felt all the more motivated to refurbish the White House because it was representative of the United States. She was more acutely aware than her husband or most men in Congress that a shabby White House would discredit the presidency and the Union in the eyes of friends and foes. She was allotted a \$20,000 budget to accomplish this herculean task. Determined to choose quality, she went \$6,878 over-budget, which upset her husband, Congress, and a good portion of the country. However, Congress covered the excess, and we still benefit today from Mary's insightful and daring undertaking in making the White House a place of elegance, respectability, and power befitting the importance of the United States in the world. She blazed a trail for future First Ladies.

At the time, however, poor Mary faced much criticism, and a lot of it quite irrational: when she entertained, she was accused of unpatriotic extravagance. When, in 1862, shattered by the loss of their 12-year-old son, she abstained from entertainment, she was lambasted for shirking her duties. Through it all, Mary remained a staunch supporter of her husband, who valued her political comments. She visited army hospitals; she raised money to help newly-freed slaves moving to Washington; she even occasionally accompanied her husband to battlefields.

Then, the worst happened: when victory in the tragic war between states was at hand, her husband was assassinated. The shock was too much. Mary could not even attend the funeral. After she left the White House, she travelled, at first with her unmarried son, then alone after he died suddenly, and spent money unwisely. Her oldest son, Robert, maybe with good intentions, had her committed to a private mental asylum. She stayed there less than four months and was eventually declared sane, but she felt, understandably, betrayed, and it took years for her and Robert to reconcile, though the closeness they had in past was never restored. She died in 1882.

One may rightly wonder where such negative view of Mary Lincoln came from. It was mostly the fabrication of William Herndon, former law partner of Abraham Lincoln. He profoundly disliked Mary, and the feeling was mutual. He resented the fact that Lincoln placed his marriage above their friendship and spread rumors that the Lincoln marriage had been complete misery, depicted Mary as erratic, despotic, selfish, calling her a "she-wolf" and "the female wild cat of the age." For the longest time, sadly, his comments, and later his biased biography of Lincoln carried weight. Today, thankfully, a more objective assessment is recognizing the courage, sacrifices, sufferings and traumas, as well as the genuine value of Mary Lincoln.

Share this publication with friends.

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Haunted?

The Schoolhouse With a Story
by a wandering neighbor

The little schoolhouse near the Papillion library doesn't look particularly frightening.



In fact, if you have driven through downtown Papillion, you may have passed it without giving it much thought. It is a small, carefully preserved one-room schoolhouse, sitting among modern buildings and streets. Today it looks peaceful enough to be mistaken for an old church or perhaps a small country building that somehow found its way into town.

But the building has a story.

The Portal School was built in 1890 to serve farm families in the area around Portal Township, west of Papillion. An earlier school had been built there in 1871, but flooding eventually forced the community to replace it. The 1890 schoolhouse was later moved again, in 1908, to get it out of the flood-prone area. The township itself eventually disappeared, but the school remained.

And remarkably, it remained a school for a very long time.

Children from rural families continued to attend Portal School for generations. The school finally closed in May 1993, making it the last operating one-room schoolhouse in Sarpy County. Two years later, the Papillion Area Historical Society purchased the building for one dollar and moved it to its present location beside Sump Memorial Library.

That's the history. Then there is the other story.

At some point, a legend became attached to the old schoolhouse. In its most common telling, a teacher at the school suddenly went insane and killed her students. Some versions of the story become considerably more gruesome, but the details vary from one telling to another.

The story also became associated with a nearby bridge that came to be called Heartbeat Bridge. According to the legend, a person crossing the bridge at night could hear what sounded like the beating of children's hearts beneath the boards.

It is a disturbing story. But there is a problem. There doesn't appear to be any historical evidence that the murders ever happened.



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I'm running for city council because I feel the need to be informed
first hand, and not hear-say as to what is going on in town.
I would like to see unity in the decisions from the council, with
everyone treated equally.
I believe we need to look into getting grants to replace our water
lines that are old, leaking, and losing money on purchased water.
Budget is a big issue, knowing where the money is being spent
and treating residents equally with policies being put into place.
Paid for by Kim Allgood for Peru City Council
713 4th Street, Peru, NE 68421

Coach Wilkerson gets first win in his first season as head football coach;
PSC 54, Westgate Christian University 14.



The PSC Bobcats had an easier time with WCU.



An amazing attempt, but a hard fall prevented the reception and a touchdown against the Benedictine Ravens.



PSC Dance Team cheered the Bobcats on.

PSC Bocats v University of St. Mary Spires
PSC Home Game, a WIN! Sep 8, 2026



Team Work



SPIKE!



Student Cheer Section

A Prairie Love

Chapter 19 — After Christmas — 1924

The day after Christmas was clear and cold.



Lyle hitched the team to the wagon after breakfast, and Cora wrapped herself in her wool coat before climbing up beside him. They were going to her parents' for dinner.

The road seemed shorter than Cora remembered. Perhaps it was because she was no longer traveling it as a girl. She was going to her parents' home now as a married woman, with a home of her own waiting for her at the end of the day.

Her mother had been expecting them. The house was warm, and the smell of roast beef greeted them as they came through the door. Her father was in the kitchen, and soon the four of them were gathered around the table.

There was plenty to eat—roast beef, potatoes and gravy, vegetables, bread and pie. The conversation moved from Christmas to the weather and finally, as it often did among farmers, to the prospects for the coming year.

"How much of the place did you get into crops?" Cora's father asked.

"About eighty acres."

"That's enough for a start."

Lyle nodded. "There's another eighty, but some of it isn't worth breaking. Hills, timber, low ground."

"Then don't try to make every acre look like the next man's," her father said.

Lyle smiled. "I'm not planning to."

They talked about the farm for a while longer. Lyle mentioned the chickens, which were bringing in enough egg money to help with

12 October 2026 Your Country Neighbor

groceries, and the firewood he had been selling during the Winter.

Then he told them he was thinking about hogs.

"A few sows," he explained. "Sell some of the feeder pigs and keep one now and then. Eventually we could raise what we need ourselves."

His father-in-law nodded. "That's a reasonable way to start."

"And the cows?" he asked.

"We've got two."

"Two is enough."

Lyle hesitated before adding, "I arranged for Miller's bull to service them last summer."

Cora looked at him. She hadn't known that.

"That's how you start," her father said. "You don't buy everything at once."

The subject turned to other things, but Cora noticed that Lyle had become thoughtful. He wasn't dreaming about becoming a big farmer. He was figuring out how to make their small operation pay its way.

By the time they left, the sun was already low.

On the ride home, Cora asked, "So, what are you thinking about?"

"Next year."

"That's a pretty big subject."

Lyle smiled. "I know."

The horses walked steadily along the snow-covered road. Behind them, her parents' house grew smaller.

Ahead, somewhere beyond the trees and fields, stood their cabin, the windmill and the little barn.

They had started with very little.

But Lyle was beginning to see possibilities.

Continued in November

Share this publication with friends.

It's online at;

yourcountryneighbor.com

Letters from the Prairie

Late Winter, 1889 Nemaha County, Nebraska
19th Letter from Anna Wilhelmine Bauer to her sister Klara in Germany

My dearest Klara,

The worst of Winter seems to have passed, though I hesitate to say so. Nebraska has taught me that winter should never be declared finished too soon.

We have had several cold weeks since Christmas, but there have also been days when the sun warmed the south side of the house enough that Lena wanted to go outside without her coat. She stood in the doorway arguing with me that the sun meant Spring had arrived.

Johann laughed and told her that the sun does not make the decision.

The children are tired of Winter now. The boys have grown weary of carrying wood and breaking ice from the water trough. Even Lena, who once thought every snowfall was beautiful, now asks when the grass will be green again.

I understand how they feel.

There are mornings when I wake before the others and listen to the house. The fire has burned low, and for a moment everything is quiet except for the wind against the windows. I think of the mornings at home in Germany, and I can almost imagine that I am there.

Then I hear one of the children moving upstairs, and I remember where I am.

The work continues even when the fields are asleep.

Johann spends part of each day checking the livestock and making sure there is enough feed. He has been looking over the farm implements, too, and talking about what must be repaired before Spring. There is always something.

Last week he came into the house carrying a broken harness strap and laid it on the table.

“This will not last another season,” he said.

I asked him whether everything on a farm eventually breaks.

He smiled.

“Everything that gets used.”

I think that may be true of people as well.

We have been here long enough now that I sometimes forget how different everything once seemed. The roads that were strange to us last year are becoming familiar. We know which neighbor will stop to help when a wagon breaks down and which one is likely to arrive with advice before you have asked for it.

We know where to go for flour and where to find a good piece of cloth.

We know which children belong to which families.

We are beginning to know the prairie not as a place we came to, but as a place where things happen.

That may be the greatest change of all.

The other evening Johann and I stood outside after supper. The sky was clear, and there was still snow in the shadows, but the air felt different.

“Spring is coming,” he said.

I told him he was saying that because he wanted it to be true.

He laughed.

“Perhaps.”

But I knew what he meant.

There was a smell in the air that reminded me of wet earth, though the ground was still frozen. Somewhere a bird was calling. The days are growing longer, and the light stays a little later in the evening.

These are small things.

Yet after a long Winter, small things seem important.

The children have begun talking about the garden. Lena wants flowers, of course. The boys want to know when they can help their father in the fields.

I have already begun thinking about seeds.

Do you remember how Mother used to save the best seeds from one year for the next? I never thought much about it when I was a girl. Now I find myself doing the same thing.

Perhaps this is another way a person becomes part of a place.

You begin by learning its roads, then its weather, then its work.

And before you realize it, you are saving seeds for another year.

Klara, I sometimes wonder what you would think if you could see us now.

I have learned enough English to manage most of the ordinary business of the farm, though there are still times when I must ask someone to repeat himself.

There are still moments when I miss home terribly.

But there are also moments when I look across our fields and realize that I am no longer looking at a strange country.

I am looking at our farm.

Perhaps that is what home becomes.

Not the place where you were born.

Not even the place you remember most fondly.

Perhaps home is the place where you begin making plans for tomorrow.

The boys are calling me now. Lena has found her seed packet and wants to know when she may plant the flowers.

I told her she must wait.

She did not like that answer.

Perhaps she will learn patience from the prairie.

Or perhaps the prairie will learn that Anna's daughter is not easily persuaded.

I wish you could see her.

With all my love,

Anna Wilhelmine Bauer

Continued in November

Westward With Lewis & Clark

Chapter 14: A Different Country (continued)
The meeting did not last long, but it changed something among us.

The men we had seen along the shore were not hostile. They were cautious, as we were. Gifts were exchanged, words were spoken through interpreters, and the captains did their best to make clear that we came in peace.

I watched from the riverbank, wondering what they thought of us.

To them, we must have been nearly as strange as they were to us.

Our boats, our weapons, our uniforms, the great keelboat with its tall mast—all of it must have looked unfamiliar. Yet they stood calmly before us, as though they had seen many strange things before.

When the meeting was over, the men returned to the boats.

For a while no one said much.

Then someone remarked that the country ahead would probably be filled with people we had never seen.

No one laughed.

We had begun the journey thinking mostly about the river and what lay beyond its headwaters. Now we understood that the journey was also about the people who already lived along its banks.

The next morning we pushed westward again.

The river remained difficult, the current strong and the banks unfamiliar. But I found myself looking at the land differently.

A trail disappearing into the grass was no longer simply a trail.

A column of smoke was no longer merely smoke.

Somewhere beyond the next bend, people were living their lives, just as we had been living ours.

And the farther we traveled, the more I suspected that the country ahead would teach us things no map could show.

— Elias LeGrand *Continued in November*
October 2026 Your Country Neighbor 13

ARBOR CITY NEWS

Morton-James Public Library Calendar of Events October 2026

All activities held at Morton-James Public Library (unless otherwise noted), 923 1st Corso, Nebraska City, NE 68410
For questions call 402-873-5609 or visit morton-jamespubliclibrary.com All Programming is Free and Open to the Public

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

ALL ages and experience levels are welcome to join Chess Club on Thursdays. If you have never played, members will teach you! Chess boards provided.

Humanities Nebraska: CA Waller “I Got the Blues “

Thursday, October 1 7:00PM - 8:00PM

Presentation introduces the types of blues songs and historical background of each song. Audience participation is encouraged.

Paint Together

Registration Required

Saturday, October 3 10:00AM - 11:30AM

Make a paired canvas painting. All materials provided. Free event, ages 8 years and older. Must have a partner to paint for class. Registration required in groups of two. Call the Library at 402-873-5609 to reserve your spot!

Lego Club Monday, October 5 3:30PM - 5:00PM

Join us at the Library every first and third Monday of the month from 3:30 - 5:00 pm for Lego Club! Free build with Legos at the club or bring your own sets to work on. Ages 8 and older.

Library Story Time - Bats

Wednesday, October 7 10:00AM - 10:30AM

We will read stories, learn some signs in American Sign Language, then make a handprint batcraft. Story Times are geared toward children ages 2-6 and their families. Repeated on October 8 at 4pm.

Yarn Crafters Club Wednesday, October 7 1:30PM - 3:00PM

This is for all levels of crafters. Bring your own hooks, yarn, needles, whatever you need to make your yarn craft. Club members will be here to help those beginning. MJPL will have some patterns available. Everyone 15 and older is welcome!

Engaging Mature Minds

Thursday, October 8 10:00AM - 11:30AM

Join us to engage your mind by connecting with other seniors while acquiring wisdom through community. Different topics/speakers each class. Free to attend, no reservation needed. Optional free will donations to support the library accepted.

Library Story Time

Thursday, October 8 4:00PM - 4:30PM

We will read stories, learn some signs in American Sign Language, then make a handprint bat craft. Story Times are geared toward children ages 2-6 and their families.

Library Board Meeting

Friday, October 9 4:00PM - 5:00PM

Mystery Stuffed Animal Workshop *Registration Required*

Saturday, October 10 10:00AM - 11:00AM

We have stuffed animals left over from some of our previous build-an-animal workshops! Youth 18 or younger are invited to sign up for a special workshop where they'll get to build a random stuffed friend from our "Mystery Menagerie." Call or visit the Library to secure a spot! No library card required. 402-873-5609

Library Closed for NLA Conference

Wednesday, October 14

Library Closed until 6:30 pm for NLA Conference Thursday, October 15

Humanities Nebraska: Votes for Women

Thursday, October 15 7:00PM - 8:00PM

The U.S and Nebraska Campaigns for Suffrage” with Dianne Bystrom.

Library Closed For NLA Conference

Friday, October 16

Writers Workshop

Saturday, October 17 10:00AM - 11:00AM

Join us for a roundtable-style writers workshop! Share writing and give feedback to others. Zoom option available. Email mjplibraryww@gmail.com to have a Zoom link sent to you if you cannot attend in person. Bring a short piece of your writing to share! This program is for writers aged 18 +

Lego Club Monday, October 19

3:30PM - 5:00PM

Join us at the Library every first and third Monday of the month from 3:30 - 5:00 pm for Lego Club! Free build with Legos at the club or bring your own sets to work on. Ages 8 and older.

Afternoon Book Club- Lucy Gayhearn by Willa Cather

Tuesday, October 20 2:00PM - 3:00PM

Library Story Time - Not So Scary Ghosts

Wednesday, October 21, 2026

10:00AM - 10:30AM

A story time filled with friendly ghosts. We will read stories, learn some signs in American Sign Language, then make a ghost picture. Story Times are geared toward children ages 2-6 and their families. Repeated October 22 at 4pm.

Evening Book Club – The Light We Lost by Jill Santopolo

Wednesday, October 21 5:30PM - 6:30PM

Evening Book Club meets the third Wednesday of each month at 5:30 in the Kimmel Gallery. New members always welcome!

Engaging Mature Minds

Thursday, October 22 10:00AM - 11:30AM

Join us to engage your mind by connecting with other seniors while acquiring wisdom through community. Different topics/speakers each class. Free to attend, no reservation needed. Optional free will donations to support the library accepted.

Library Story Time

Thursday, October 22 4:00PM - 4:30PM

Tween '70's Craft Night *Registration Required*

Friday, October 23, 2026 5:00PM - 6:00PM

We're traveling back to the 70's for a tween craft night! Anyone ages 10-14 is invited to:

-make a lava lamp

-adopt a pet rock

-eat snacks from the 70's

-listen to 70's music on records

-Participate in a 70's costume competition. Dress your best!

Sunsets with Stella: The art, history, and poetry of great plains cemeteries

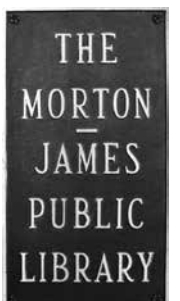
Sunday, October 25 2:00PM - 3:00PM

Enjoy this presentation on cemetery photograph and history. Writer and researcher Amanda VanderBroek will share original photography from cemeteries in Otoe County and surrounding areas. The program, will also include readings of some original poems inspired by these historical monuments.

Youth Halloween Party Saturday, October 31

10:00AM – Noon

Youth and their families are invited to the Library for a craft, coloring pages, and a trick or treat trail through the Library! Stop by any time between 10AM and noon. Costumes encouraged but not required.



ARBOR CITY NEWS

News from Nebraska City

Butterflies and Life

Bruce Madsen

The other day I was standing by my shed
Doing what I do mostly, scratching my head
When a butterfly came by and landed at my feet
So I watched for a while and thought, 'how unique'

It seemed very calm, was in no rush as it fluttered from here to there
I didn't move lest it be alarmed, stood motionless so it wouldn't feel harmed
The kind of butterfly it was I couldn't tell
But I assumed it was a specific type of swallowtail

In my mind I thought it was such a beauty
It was smooth and sleek with graceful agility
Its color was black, just as black as night
With a silky sheen that illuminated its flight

And around the body, wings and all
Were little yellow dots evenly spaced
And perfectly placed
And I thought, how can something so beautiful be so small

So recently I lost a long time friend, someone I grew up with
He passed away quietly, his life was a gift
The good things said at the funeral event
About his life in review, proved his life was a life well spent

So, sitting there in the pew, I connected the two
Both were admired and both represent the presence of life's beauty too
For some this connection might be vague
But the correlation between the two, to me, creates a special display

As both were created by the hand of God
And both represent something we ought to applaud



ARBOR CITY NEWS

News from Nebraska City

J.J. Palmtag INC

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The Flag Corps Waved "Hello."



Victorian Christmas in October: The 10-room Wildwood House features Victorian-themed decorations throughout October.

Arbor City News

is a monthly news section in
Your Country Neighbor

A Southeast Nebraska
Regional Magazine (w/News)



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The Germanfest Float is an annual entry from Syracuse.

ARBOR CITY NEWS

News from Nebraska City



FALL IS BUSY ENOUGH.

LET US TAKE ONE THING OFF YOUR LIST.

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The Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge was serene in September. I am looking forward to Snow Geese in November or December, with Bald Eagles following. In the meantime, various shore birds will begin migrating through.

October

Sheila Tinkham

Fall full of football

Frolic, feast and a cornucopia of harvest

The combine's long fingers gather the golden corn destined for
food or fuel, ethanol

Cheer on your favorite team Huskers or Peru Bobcats

Yell yourself hoarse

And indulge in apple cider

Then scare yourself in a haunted hay rack ride

Be beguiled by ghosts and goblins

Welcome October and its refreshing cool breezes

Adios September heat and humidity!

October once the eighth month octo means 8 in Latin

Add two months January and February

Voila! 10th month

October is cooler with Halloween flirting with the 31st and

Octoberfest in the beginning, middle or end...

beer is a fickle friend... Enjoy your October!



inspired DENTAL

General & Cosmetic Dentistry

Maribel Caudillo, DDS, practices a full scope of general and cosmetic dentistry with expertise ranging from dental implants to dentures, crowns and root canals. Dr. Caudillo and her team can now provide a wide variety of dental solutions to create healthy smiles that will last a lifetime.

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by Devon Adams, Nebraska City

THE RIVER WILD

She's a giant snake winding down from the mountains to the sea, muscles rippling and swirling with mud and trees ripped from her ragged banks and the hundreds of tributaries that make up her family tree. Her lines are drawn on the large canvas of the prairies, rushing to join the Mississippi River that pours into the Gulf. She is part of the process that builds new land and also wears it away. She is history and future all in one as the years follow her twists and turns toward a tomorrow that no one can see from here. She is the Mighty Missouri River, flowing full of the past and the future of this ancient slab of soil and stones.

ON THE EDGE

You ease gradually away from calm days with easy minutes and hours that belong to you. At some point thoughts become nervous and your attention is always distracted from being present at any given moment to apprehension about approaching events. The question is always, "How bad will it be this time when he comes home?" Not, "Will he be in a bad mood?" Because that is always the case. You are in a hostage situation that doesn't get better. Your spouse isn't who you thought he was. The situation seems to get better at times because he wants you to believe that, and because you want to believe. But if you don't get away, your soul will never be free to be you.

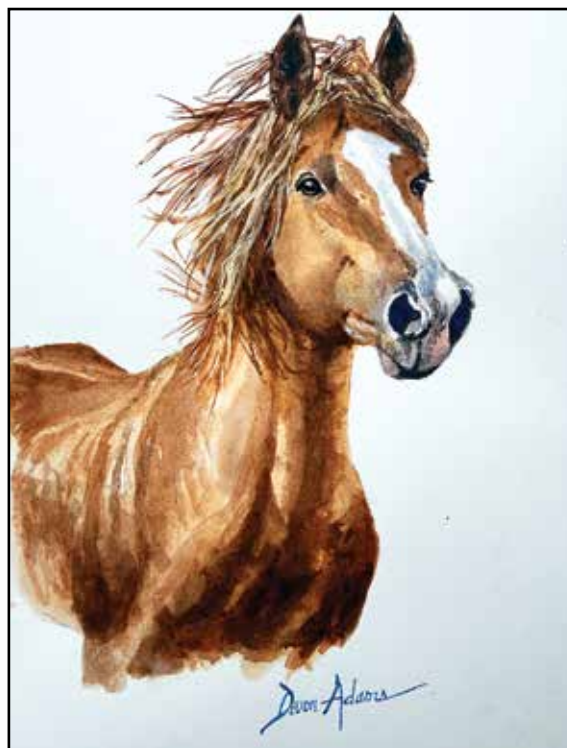
SHIVER AND SHAKE

Deep in the damp, dark corner at the back of the barn, up in the rafters, there was something. Something moving. Catching a sliver of moonlight sneaking in through a crack in the old board siding was a fuzzy form trembling like a scared ghost! Then it was me who was shaking when a loud voice hooted, "Who, who, who, who? who are you, you, you, you?" I didn't answer right away because I was running out of the dark into the light from the kitchen window. As I stood there watching the black, shadowed barn, a form flew out the door and sailed low over my head. It was like a silent scream in action. On wings of silver moonlight, it circled up and away into the night and the sky, a hunter under a hunters' moon. A stealthy owl on a mission to seek and kill the prey that didn't know he was coming.

By Artist, Devon Adams PENCIL AND WATERCOLOR

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Nebraska City, NE 68410

Phone: 402-209-9377

adamsdevon07@gmail.com

SLICK SPOTS

The wind drift was easy and slow until it got an edge, like a knife someone sharpened to a lethal, efficient edge. The calendar said, "Enough of nice, it's time for ice." A gentle rain got the message to switch gears in the middle of the afternoon, and when the temps dropped like a rock, the wet soil froze like a steak thrown into a freezer. Wet pavement went slick in an instant and a few cars skidded sideways into ditches, and the ones that rolled over were totaled for sure. We seriously are never on alert until the hammer drops and you know what happens to the fan. Oh well, maybe next week October will forget to be mean.

THE TENTH MONTH

Time to give up and admit that summer is gone until it comes back in shorts with sweat and chiggers and skeeters and grass that needs mowing just after you cut it but it rains. Or it doesn't rain and you have to water it. Your sweet memory of lying in the hammock with a beer and a book happened on a Tuesday evening just before your AC quit and you never did get back to the next chapter. Hang on to that thought, as you lose power in an early ice storm and it is too cold to sit and read, even if you had lights that would turn on! It's the thought that counts, right?

Window On Fifth Street

Stephen Hassler, Peru

Do you look forward to “Your Country Neighbor” each month?
Perhaps you've never asked yourself why.
Television often tells us to look at celebrities.
The Internet tells us to look at conflict.
Social media frequently says, "Look at me."

“Your Country Neighbor” quietly says something different.
Look at your neighbor.
Look at the courthouse square.
Look at the migrating geese.
Look at the county fair.
Look at the old windmill.
Look at the volunteer firefighter.
Look at the retired farmer who still drives to town every morning for coffee.

Ordinary lives are worth noticing.
I've often wondered whether we've forgotten how remarkable ordinary life really is.
We pass the same streets every day until we stop seeing them.
We drive by familiar barns without noticing how the evening sun catches their weathered boards.
We hurry through another season without realizing that the cicadas will soon give way to geese overhead, and before long another year will have quietly slipped into memory.
Yet these are the things that become our lives.
Years from now, we won't remember every national headline.
We probably won't remember what was trending online this week.
But we will remember;
The pie at the church supper.
The first Friday night football game.
The neighbor who waved from across the street.
The fragrance of alfalfa in bloom.
None of these moments seems especially important when it happens.
But over time, they become part of the story we carry with us. They are the familiar sights, sounds, smells, and small kindnesses that make a town feel like our town and a place feel like home.
Those are the moments that quietly become home.
Perhaps that's why “Your Country Neighbor” has found a place on so many kitchen tables over the years. It isn't trying to compete with cable news or social media, or even the local newspaper.
It isn't trying to be louder.
It's trying to be closer.
Closer to the places we know.
Closer to the people we recognize.
Closer to the seasons we're living through together.
If this little magazine has any purpose beyond informing, I hope it is simply this: To help us notice what has been around us all along.
Because once we notice it, ordinary life doesn't seem quite so ordinary anymore.

Beauty is rarely absent. More often, it is simply overlooked.

Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson, Auburn

Although I have not actually kept track, I'm pretty confident that we get an Amazon delivery at least every other day. A major contributor to that level of online shopping is Amazon's policy of free returns for virtually any reason. Shopping used to be overwhelmingly considered the province of women. That made sense when men were at work all day and homemakers had the liberty of going to the store whenever it was convenient.

But thanks to online shopping, that playing field has been pretty much leveled. You don't need to find time to go to a store to shop. Men and women alike can do it from almost any location, any time of day or night. You can compare products and prices in mere minutes. Throw in the free time of retirement, and men are even more likely to take up the mantle of chief household shopper. They may not think of it as “shopping” per se. It's more like inventory management or budget maximization or research.

And that “free returns” thing I mentioned earlier? That is the icing on the cake. There's no hassle or embarrassment having to come up with a reason for returning something like there is in a face-to-face transaction. You can order with abandon and never experience buyer's remorse.

I realize this is not news to most of you. But it provides a lead-in to the real point of this month's column.

You may have guessed by now that Hubby is our chief online shopper. The Amazon account is in his name. And he has gotten pretty adept at re-packaging merchandise that wasn't what he expected. Hubby will be the first to admit that he doesn't have a lot of patience for things that don't seem to work as they should. He does not hesitate to re-package and return a reject the same day it arrives.

I offer, as an example, today's Amazon delivery of a combination AM/FM radio, CD player and cassette tape player. I had mentioned that I had no way to listen to some Garrison Keillor tapes I had received as a gift. Plus, our radio had recently gone kaput and our CD player was iffy. So, Hubby got right after it and found a reasonably priced combo unit.

He opened the package about 4:00 p.m. today and began reviewing the unit's features. Doing anything requiring focus at that time of day is asking for trouble. Hubby is a morning person and normally avoids tasks that tax his powers of concentration after lunchtime. So, it wasn't long before I heard grumbling. “This machine does not have a radio on-off button. It's supposed to be a radio and a CD player and a cassette player.” Hubby reviewed the instruction manual and attempted again to figure out how to turn on the radio. “You would think a radio would have an on-off button, wouldn't you?” he asked again, with growing irritation. I asked if he was sure he had ordered a unit that included a radio. Short answer: “Yes.” He even checked the order form on his Amazon account. It was definitely supposed to be an AM/FM radio, CD player and cassette player.

By then, he was ready to just box it up and ship it back. But first, I ventured one more question. “Does it have an antenna?”

Yes, it had an antenna. OK, then. It must include a radio. I offered to take a look at it before he returned it. Offering to “help” Hubby is not always met with a positive response. I confess that my “help” with certain things is not always all that helpful, but I thought it was worth a try in this instance.

Hubby was correct that there was no button with the words “Radio On/Off” written on it. But there was an icon on the radio that matched the icon in the instructions for turning on the radio. Have I mentioned how much Hubby hates icons? I'm not a fan, either, but I pushed the button and voila! The radio worked and actually had pretty good reception on the stations we typically listen to.

So, a hasty, unnecessary return was averted and we now have a working radio/CD player/cassette player. The moral of this story is that instant ordering and fast delivery is nice, but sometimes, slowing down on making returns is a good thing.



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NEBRASKA CITY, NE



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Running Boards
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