

Your
September

Country Neighbor

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and Share!

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Golden Rod, H-67 South of Peru, NE



Monarch on Butterfly Bush near Fine Arts Gallery in Brownville, Nebraska

A Magazine for Small Town & Rural America

*Sweeten your Coffee Break with these
Voices and Views from the
Valleys of the Nemaha*



Cardinal feeding his 'baby daughter.'

Contents

Covid Update.....	2
Two Medicare Workshops in September.....	3
August Butterfly Photos.....	1,3,6,8,11,12
Nemaha County Parade Photos.....	4
August Wildflowers.....	5
Devon's Poetry.....	6 & 7
Merri's "Diary of a Part-time Housewife".....	10
Dorothy's "Depression Day Learning".....	11
"Window On Fifth Street".....	12
PSC Football Photos.....	13
 PSC Football Schedule.....	14
PSC News.....	15
PSC Volleyball Schedule.....	16
 Valentino's Coupon for up to Six!!...	16

Your Country Neighbor

Voices and Views From the Valleys of the Nemaha

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

P.O. Box 126
Peru, Nebraska 68421

countryneighbor@windstream.net

Online at yourcountryneighbor.com

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

Ralph Waldo Emerson

September Writers & Contributors

Devon Adams - 6 & 7

Stephen Hassler - 2, 12

Mary Ann Holland - 3

Merri Johnson - 10

Dorothy Rieke - 11

Thank You!

Readers!

Returning this month are most of your favorite Nemaha Valley columnists. This 16-page issue can be your 2-cups-of-coffee companion.

Viewers!

In this issue you will find some of my recent photographs of wildflowers and other rural interests in Southeast Nebraska..

Shoppers!

Keep up with local businesses and news of what's special this month. Please thank them for advertising in "*Your Country Neighbor!*"

Rohman Garden Dedication Sep 18 at 4:00 PM.
A long anticipated project has been completed. A tranquil garden for contemplation and rest, designed by Bob Hanna, and the inspiration for U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser's poem, "A Welcome." The words are waiting in Brownville, Nebraska, across from *The Little Red School House* Fine Arts Gallery.

Good News and Bad News

Stephen Hassler

The state of Nebraska as a whole, has experienced 10 straight weeks of increases in Covid-19 cases. Yet none of our four extreme southeast Nebraska counties are showing any changes since the end of June. That's Otoe, Nemaha, Johnson, and Richardson counties. Gage (Beatrice area), has 'no' new cases either. Rumour says otherwise, but until I can uncover some dependable statistics...

The bad news is that we are surrounded on three sides by counties that have had new cases during August; highly populated Sarpy County on the north has had 598 new cases testing positive, Fremont County in Iowa (Sidney area), has had 28 new cases, Atchison county (includes Rock Port), has had 59 new cases, 13 in Holt County (across from Falls City), 56 in Brown County (Hiawatha area), and 63 in Nemaha County, Kansas (Sabetha area). These numbers are as of August 25th.

How long our "country neighborhood" will remain untouched, if indeed it is "untouched" by the spread of Covid's Delta variant is unknown, but 'back to school' adds to the risk of the spread of the more contagious variant. And there is no logic that says we won't see more cases. So I anticipate that next month's report will be more dire.

In the meantime, use common sense and appropriate precautions against colds and influenza, as well as Covid; wash hands, avoid crowds, wear masks, and get vaccinated.

Follow CDC Guidelines as to how to avoid Covid-19.

Go to CDC.gov to keep up with guideline revisions.

Vaccines do not protect you from the common cold, so

Do Not Relax Your Handwashing.

Your Country Neighbor

Your "2-cups-of-coffee" companion

including local photos and articles

with the flavor of rural America.

Two Medicare Workshops to be Held in Nebraska City

Mary Ann Holland

A "Welcome to Medicare" workshop will be held at the new location of Southeast Community College, 1406 Central Avenue in Nebraska City, on **Thursday, Sept. 9 at 5:30**. A second workshop, "Navigating Medicare", will be held at the same location on **Thursday, Sept. 16 at 5:30**.

Tuition is being provided by the Nebraska SHIP. There is no cost to attend. To register, please visit the SHIP website at www.doi.ship@nebraska.gov, or call the SHIP office at **402-471-2841**.

Nebraska Senior Health Insurance Information Program [SHIP] offers free, unbiased Medicare counseling and education to help seniors and people with disabilities make informed decisions about health insurance. Services are provided statewide by 350 certified volunteers. Nebraska SHIP is federally-funded and is coordinated by the state Department of Insurance.

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Pipevine Swallowtail on Butterfly Bush

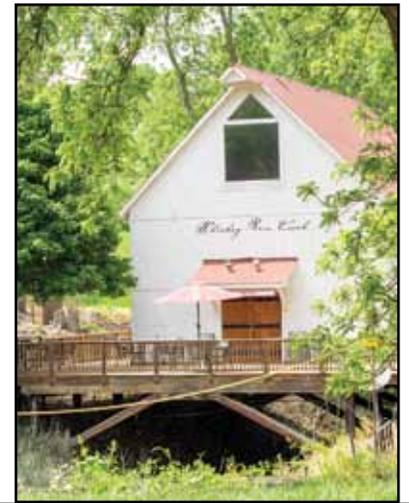
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August 16, 2021



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Field Thistle along H-136 with pond in the background.



Common Sunflower

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Cup Plant, one of two common sunflower-like wildflowers of August and September.



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P O e t r y

SAVOR THE SEASON

Evening falls faster now, as earth tilts into autumn. The rich light of summer has been spent faster than a win at gambling, lolling us into thinking we had all the time in the world to do what we'd planned on those warm spring mornings. Now our minds turn to harder months that will come before we're ready for them. But there is joy to contemplate between now and then. Precious days of morning frost that paints with a brush full of color are coming. Butter-fresh sunshine will chase away shivers, and we will have glorious dry air to breathe as the hills show off their fancy fall clothes. Lethargy from heat will be gone, and our energies will once again spark our actions into high gear.

TALL CORN

We're getting tired of standing out in the field. It was fun at first, to tell the other guys, "Hey, I'm way ahead 'cause I had leaves before you did!" But then someone yelled, "Whoa, look at that big cloud! It's getting darker, isn't it?" A huge lightning bolt smashed into the dirt next to a T-post and we all wished there was a place to hide. But of course we can't run because our roots won't let us go. Thunder claps crashed into our ears just as huge drops of rain began to hit us. Worst of all was the hail. It acted like it hated us, the way our leaves were torn and shredded. All of a sudden though, it stopped, and the sun came out again. We were so happy. Now our muscles hurt from holding up the big ears of corn that have grown on our stalks. I guess that won't be a problem much longer, though, because a big, noisy machine is cutting us down, row by row. It just got Jake, and Bret, and Luke and Bob. Now it's starting on my row! "Uh oh, OH NO _____"

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Variegated Fritillary on Butterfly Bush
Uncommon, but I usually see one once a year.

P O E T R Y

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A SILENT QUILT

It always seems too early to be true. But I saw a single bright yellow leaf lying on the lush green grass of August. And the next day five more had drifted down. Now there are so many more, and the first ones have dried into crispy paper notes with messages written in invisible ink. They are telling me that it's time to savor the sun of autumn, while there is still time to feel the fading warmth. Don't try to wait for evening, or a chill will creep into your bones, and you will shiver. Walk in afternoons, before buttermilk clouds claim the sky, and show a preview of snow that is waiting to cover our summer dreams like a soft and silent quilt.

GOING TO SCHOOL

Schools aren't always made of bricks and walls and rooms, with teachers showing papers proving that they have degrees. Learning is an always thing, that happens every day. Inside, outside, alone or not, winter, summer, fall or spring, day or night, young or old, sick or well, sad, mad or glad, living creatures are in class in every way. Even when we aren't aware, our brains take notes and file them. Computations that sing along the paths of nerves and cells connect so fast that we don't seem to think. Sometimes, answers will appear before we even ask a question! Pay more attention, Mother Nature tells us, like any good teacher. Treasure each new sight and sound and fact, and use it to find more paths to know and follow.

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BEHIND THE CURTAINS

A shroud of smoke hangs down from the sky on invisible curtain rods. Like being shut in a room with walls of windows that are hung with filmy drapes, our view is smudged by gray shapes without any definition. We know what we should be seeing, but it is lost in the murky shadows of a dream, or what seems like a nightmare. Even the majestic mountains are hiding, their usual stunning clarity lost like a bad mistake in a watercolor painting. Instead of too much water in the paint, there's not enough water to put out the raging forest fires burning out of control.

AUTUMN LEAVES

The debris of Summer is swirling in the streets and collecting in the corners of yards and up against walls and fences. What was so green and fresh has had it's time, and now is only dried pages from the book of life. For a fragment of an instant, the leaves were explosions of color before wind tore them from trees. Now the golds, reds, yellows and purples have faded to dull grays and browns. Soon, Autumn rains will make them into mushy slush turning into dust. But next Spring they'll be food for flowers coming out of Winter's chill.

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Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson, Auburn

Ah, the thrill of traveling.

Last month, I shared with you our travails in a rented house at Lake Okoboji, Iowa. That was after the fact.

This month, I have reason to complain before we even leave home.

We are flying to a nephew's wedding in Oregon in September. Hubby's former occupation as a planner at Cooper Nuclear Station left a permanent imprint on his brain. He identifies all the details and nails down the arrangements well in advance. He doesn't like unknowns when it comes to travel. Definitely not a spontaneous road-tripper. There had better be a bed waiting for us when we are ready to get off the road. No driving on and on until you find someplace to stay.

In his defense, when flying is required, one cannot wait until the last minute. Our airline tickets, car rental, and lodging reservations were made in March.

No sooner did we return from Lake Okoboji in July, but we were informed by our airline that our non-stop flight from Omaha to Portland, Oregon, had been cancelled. Well, that's disappointing. But, OK, the airlines have had a hard time of it with Covid. I guess we just have to roll with this. Be good sports.

Our outgoing flight from Omaha is still in the afternoon. And the layover in Seattle is not too onerous.

But the return trip itinerary from Portland a week later seriously stinks!! What was to be a 10:00 a.m. flight is now a 6:00 a.m. flight. We will be getting up at 3:00 a.m. to be at the airport at 4:00. Shaping up to be a minimal makeup day. No coffee, either, probably until we get through security. I guess we'll get breakfast in Seattle.

But even the red-eye flight isn't the worst of it. Oh, no. Because we need to pick up and drop off our rental car

at different times than originally scheduled, the rental car company is charging us a \$200-plus "change" fee. I expect that this price-gouging loophole is explained somewhere in the fine print.

Hubby unintentionally booked the car rental through a third-party booking service instead of directly with the rental company. Try getting any satisfaction from either the booking service or the rental company, let alone the airline, whose fault it is that our car rental schedule is screwed up in the first place.

This is why we avoid flying.

I just hope the other unpleasantness that could be awaiting us in Portland does not materialize. With luck, the heat wave of mid-August will be long gone. We intend to avoid any areas where our path could cross with the malcontents and law-breakers there. And hopefully none of the people we will be spending time with will have Covid. We are fully vaccinated, so feel fairly confident that we won't contract the virus. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is requiring masks on all flights again. That could be interesting if there are any anti-maskers onboard. And finally, there are wildfires to worry about.

Have I covered all the known and potential inconveniences and problems of this trip? I guess if we just don't crash, I'll be happy. Keep your fingers crossed for us.

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Depression Day Learning

Dorothy Rieke, Julian

Reading the account of the days during the Great Depression in COUNTRY NEIGHBOR brought many memories, some good and some bad. Those days were stressful and, at times, terrifying. As a youngster, fortunately, I was not exposed to hunger, unemployment, and the frustration of providing for a family.

At that time, most of us were “in the same boat” living our lives in near poverty and frustration. The only thing that kept us going was our dreams of a better time.

We children really didn't realize that we were living in near poverty. Oh, yes, eggs were served for meals three times a day. Children brought lard sandwiches to school for lunch. Most of us wore made-over clothing. But, in spite of these conditions, we played, sang songs, and attended school willingly.

I recall one day when my friends, sisters, stood by the schoolhouse door waiting for their mother. They would then go to a nearby hospital to see their dying dad who was injured severely in a tractor accident. The fear and the frustration was evident in their tearful eyes. Their family consisted of five children from the age 3 year to 18 years. What would their mother do to make a living for her children? She was a farm wife with few skills. The story, in a way, had a happy ending. The family moved to town where the mother was employed as a cook. She sent all her children through high school; the only son attended Milford. I am sure that Alice had many hours of fear and worry. Yet, she triumphed over poverty. In the years to come, she became known as one who did many good deeds for others.

And, education for some of us did make a difference even in those days. In fact, living during those days brought us experience and knowledge. Our dreams with effort and labor did come true in future years.

We who lived during those Depression days took much away with us. We learned to be compassionate thinking of others. We learned to avoid debt always buying only items we could afford. We shared with others keeping their needs in mind. Above all, we appreciated what we had. In other words, we were always thankful. That difficult time is remembered, but we realize that we profited from those experiences learning to live our lives in a better way.



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Watch for migrating Monarchs through mid September.

Window On Fifth Street

Stephen Hassler

Many of my “Window On Fifth Street” stories come from my memories of small town America while growing up, or even more recent. Earlier this month, when I heard of the passing of Nanci Griffith, her NYT obituary intrigued me, so I looked up her music on youtube, and one of her songs, “*Love at the Five and Dime*” jumped out at me. And that brought up memories of those joyous times when, about once a month, mom would drive us kids from the small farm in northeast Nebraska to Norfolk [a big town]. She would take us to the “5 and 10 cent” stores. *Woolworth’s* and *Hestead’s* were on the same block!

We would stand tip-toe at the display counters full of toy-treasures; matchbox cars, cap pistols, yo-yo’s, balsa airplane gliders, and more. Balsa gliders would break too soon, but not before we got our money’s worth. Spending 10 cents for a glider left ten cents for another toy, and five cents for five pieces of “penny candy.” A quarter used to go a long way.

A couple times a year, we drove to Omaha in our ’51 Ford’ to visit my grandparents on Vinton Street in South Omaha. And sometimes we went shopping downtown. In *Woolworth’s* there was a wide stairway that took us to a lower level where the first counter you came to served Eskimo Pies out of a cooler. I never heard of Eskimo Pies until my father bought one there, and I could see it was made with ice cream. My brother, sister, and I wanted one of course, but we received a short, “No,” or a shake of his head, and although disappointed, we were used to my father’s behaviors. But he worked the fields; plowed, planted, harvested. He was the bread-earner; it was logical to us that he should have the first slice of bread, and maybe even the last. Had our mother been there, we would have appealed to her, perhaps successfully, but she was shopping elsewhere in the Brandeis “bargain basement.” I don’t remember ever buying anything at the *Woolworth’s* in Omaha. Maybe it was too expensive, or maybe our timing was bad, but it was a thrill to make the visit. Omaha was a different experience from Norfolk’s five and dime. Bigger, more people, overwhelming.

The earliest *Woolworth’s* was in 1878, so by the 1940’s and 1950’s the wood floors in Norfolk’s dime-stores had become “rolling.” There was a unique smell, as there was to small town hardware stores and to small town pharmacies. Maybe it’s just nostalgia, I’m not sure, but I’d recognize it if it ever engulfed me again. (I am reminded of *Wenzl’s Hardware* in Nebraska City, when Walt was still in business.)

I heard of a “variety store” in Holton, Kansas. Maybe it’s still there. There are “soda fountains” in the the Iowa pharmacies in Hamburg and Corning. I graduated from Corning High School, but I don’t remember ever experiencing the soda fountain back then, but I stopped there the last time I visited just a few years ago. I didn’t have a strawberry soda, but the ice cream cones were giant!

Woolworth’s evolved into *Woolco*, *Kresge’s* into *K-Mart*, and these businesses were replaced by even bigger “box” stores; *Target* and *Walmart*. There are small stores today where you can buy many items for just a dollar, and bargains are not uncommon, but there was a time when many things could be purchased for five or ten cents.

I can’t go back to *Woolworth’s* or *Hestead’s* (or *Kresge’s* or *Ben Franklin’s*), but I can go back in my mind to memories of the sights, sounds, smells, and the wonders of the “five and dime.” Thanks for the reminder, Nanci.



Autumn is many people’s favorite season. What’s not to love about visiting the local pumpkin patch, going on a hayrack ride, and feeling a bit of chill in the air?

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Tiger Swallowtail on Butterfly Bush



PSC v Missouri Valley College At Home, August 28, Win, 47 - 21



Above, Three Touchdown Plays -- Below, Action Shots





Peru State College

BOBCATS

2021 BOBCAT FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

AUG 28
MISSOURI VALLEY COLLEGE
PERU, NE - OAK BOWL

SEPT 4
CENTRAL METHODIST UNIV.
@Fayette, MO

SEPT 11
BENEDICTINE COLLEGE
PERU, NE - OAK BOWL

SEPT 18
BAKER UNIV.
@Baldwin City, KS

SEPT 25
MIDAMERICA NAZARENE UNIV.
HOMECOMING
PERU, NE - OAK BOWL

OCT 2
EVANGEL UNIV.
@Springfield, MO

OCT 16
CLARKE UNIV.
PERU, NE - OAK BOWL

OCT 23
WILLIAM PENN UNIV.
@Oskaloosa, IA

OCT 30
GRAND VIEW UNIV.
@Des Moines, IA

NOV 6
GRACELAND UNIV.
PERU, NE - OAK BOWL

NOV 13
CULVER-STOCKTON COLLEGE
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Above, Peru State Volleyball Team. First Home Game, Sep 6.

Left, Members of the Peru State Dance Team marching in the Nemaha County Parade, August 16, 2021.

Peru State College News

2020-21 Peru State Swenson Winners Announced

This year's honorees are Vivian Brown (Wichita, KS) and Nicholas Novak (Dawson NE). In addition, the individuals selected as the 2019-20 recipients – Claire (Cudney) Renyer (Marysville, Kan./Sabetha, Kan.) and Luis Constantino (Varzea Grande, Brazil) – were also honored as they were not formally recognized last year.

About the Swenson Award

Each year since 1925, outstanding student-athletes have been presented with the Bert Swenson award in recognition of their participation in athletics, outstanding character, personality, service, and loyalty to Peru State. The award was created in memory of Bert and Stella Swenson's 13-month old son, Bert, Jr., who passed away. Bert Swenson, Sr., was a football great who graduated from Peru State College in 1909. The Shickley, Nebraska, native served as the football team captain and class president during his senior year at PSC. In 2009, Mr. Swenson was honored posthumously with his induction into the PSC athletic hall of fame.

Since 1999, a female and male selection has been made by the members of the athletic department staff.

2020-21 Recipients;

Vivian Brown was a four-year member of the Bobcat golf team. Vivian is beginning her teaching career as a resource room educator at LeMay Elementary in the Bellevue Public School system.

Nicholas Novak was a four-year member of the Peru State football team. Nicholas recently completed training at the Nebraska Law Enforcement Academy and is working as a police officer in Falls City.

Peru State Athletic Department Earns Top NAIA Champions of Character Mark

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) revealed Wednesday the organization's Champions of Character Five-Star Award winners.

For the third year in a row, Peru State scored the top mark with a perfect score of 100. Peru State was only one of two members of the Heart of America Athletic Conference to achieve the Gold Level and the perfect 100-point status.

Traditionally, institutions are measured on a demonstrated commitment to Champions of Character and earned points in character training, conduct in competition, academic focus, character recognition and character promotion. Institutions earned points based on exceptional student-athlete grade point averages and by having minimal to no ejections during competition throughout the course of the academic year.

The NAIA worked to collaborate with member institutions to better reflect efforts that were impacted by transition and adjustments from COVID-19.

This is the just the third time in 12 years that Peru State has earned Gold Level status and to earn the perfect mark.

Bobcat athletic director Wayne Albury was more than pleased that the Champions of Character information was released. Albury stated, "I am very proud of what our student-athletes and the entire athletic department has accomplished by reaching the pinnacle of the NAIA's Champions of Character program. Especially for the third time in a row of having a perfect score."

Peru State Competitive Cheer Team Hosting Youth Camp

The Peru State Competitive Cheer team will be hosting a youth camp on September 11th from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The cheer camp is for ages 5-13 years old. The campers will learn jumps, motion techniques, tumbling and more. The camp costs \$39 dollars to attend.

In addition, after the youth camp is over, the cheer team will perform prior to the home football game versus Benedictine College that kicks off at 6 p.m. inside the Oak Bowl.

If interested, please contact cheer coach Cara Cepuran at 402-245-7921 or email her at ccepuran@peru.edu for more details about the camp.

Pre-registration is required to attend the camp. Here is the URL link for that the **registration form**: <http://forms.gle/uaRaTnKAdJnCCury7>

VOLLEYBALL

Day 1 at the KCAC Fall Fling

Peru State Volleyball team opened the season in Hutchinson, KS, as they played two games on Day 1 of the **Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference (KCAC) Fall Fling**. The Bobcats lost to Avila (MO) 3-0 in game one and then lost to Bethel (KS) 3-1 on August 19 in game two to open their 2021 season.

Peru State is 0-2 overall to start off the new volleyball season.

Day 2 at the KCAC Fall Fling

On the second day of the KCAC Fall Fling, the `Cats would get revenge as they would beat Southwestern (KS) 3-2 in game one and beat York 3-0 in game two on August 21.

Peru State moves to 2-2 overall on the season.

2021 VOLLEYBALL HOME SCHEDULE




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SEPTEMBER

6	Culver-Stockton College	Peru, NE	11:00a.m.
10	Mount Marty Univ.	Peru, NE	6:00p.m.
11	Presentation College	Peru, NE	9:00a.m.
11	Dakota State Univ.	Peru, NE	1:00p.m.
21	Graceland Univ.	Peru, NE	7:30p.m.
24	Benedictine College	Peru, NE	7:30p.m.
25	Baker Univ.	Peru, NE	11:00a.m.

OCTOBER

15	Mount Mercy Univ.	Peru, NE	3:30p.m.
16	Clarke Univ.	Peru, NE	3:30p.m.
29	Missouri Valley College	Peru, NE	7:00p.m.
30	Central Methodist Univ.	Peru, NE	2:00p.m.

NOVEMBER

2	Grand View Univ.	Peru, NE	7:00p.m.
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