

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



Peru State lost to Oklahoma Panhandle St. University on August 30, Final Score PSC 9 - OK Panhandle 10

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Paid for by Nemaha County Visitor's Committee



So long Summer skies and roadside green;  
We'll see you again in the Spring.

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“Your Country Neighbor” is delivered to the following communities in Southeast Nebraska & NW Missouri.  
**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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Peru, Nebraska 68421

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**www.yourcountryneighbor.com**

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**ADVERTISING RATES ARE ON PAGE 10**

**This Month’s Writers & Contributors**

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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

*“Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very  
important that you do it because no one else will.”*  
Ghandi

September Steps In

*by a country neighbor*

September doesn’t knock—it steps softly.

A cooler breeze slips through the screens at night. The garden  
still offers, but more slowly now—fewer tomatoes, tougher  
squash. School buses hum along the gravel roads again, and  
you can tell who teaches by the stack of papers riding shotgun.

In town, high schoolers march in the mornings, practicing for  
halftime. Fair ribbons still hang in some kitchen windows.  
There’s football on the radio, sweet corn on the stove, and a  
pair of jeans hung by the back door because it’s finally cool  
enough to wear them.

The light changes, too. Shadows stretch long across the fields.  
Combines idle, but not for long. The cottonwood leaves are  
just beginning to let go—just one or two at first, like scouts.  
You start making mental notes of where the extra blankets are.

Still, there’s time. Time for one more cookout, one more back  
porch drink, one more slow walk down a gravel lane, sun-  
flower heads tilting above the ditch. If August is the height of  
the season, September is its memory being made—the way  
the prairie begins to fold its quilt, one sun-warmed square at a  
time.

So in this issue, as ever, you’ll find stories that lean into the  
change. Some fictional, some not. Some haunted, some sweet.  
All of them rooted in our shared ground, weathered, a little  
windblown, but still standing.

We’re glad you’re reading. And if you find a sack of apples on  
your porch, it means someone thought you might like a little  
sweetness for the months ahead.

Here’s to a September worth remembering. And don’t forget  
the Valentino’s coupon on page 10, because Fall chores are  
coming, and you deserve at least one night without dishes.

*“We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and  
disoriented, but at the same time, important and needed, all of us  
called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other.”*  
Pope Francis



## The Carson House -- Haunted?

*by a wandering neighbor*



The Carson House, also known as the John Carson House, is another elegant and historic structure in Brownville, built in 1860. It was the home of John Carson, a wealthy Irish immigrant and merchant. The house is admired for its architectural detail, including a graceful veranda and sweeping staircase.

Unlike the Bailey House, the Carson House doesn't have a widely known ghost story—but it has an aura. Local docents and preservationists describe:

- Odd sensations near the staircase and back parlor—feelings of being watched or sudden chills.
- Children who visit sometimes report a “sad lady” looking out an upper window, though adults see nothing.
- Antique items in the house sometimes go missing and reappear in strange places.

While nothing dramatic occurred at the Carson House (as far as records show), its long history, antique furnishings, and preserved atmosphere still invite mystery. Some believe any home that old—especially one that saw so many lives pass through—will inevitably carry traces of the people who once lived, wept, and whispered there.

Next “Haunted?” In the October issue, The Haunted Hills of Seven Sisters Road

## Post Script to last month's “Captain Bailey House”

The Brownville Historical Society highlights the theory that Bailey and his wife were poisoned by a jealous neighbor, a claim repeated in many paranormal accounts. Some later tellings suggest he was shot on his doorstep over business troubles. However, no contemporary newspaper, legal record, or museum documentation supports the shooting narrative. The lethal poisoning version remains the most frequently cited.



### Blayne Behrends

Agent

website: [blaynebehrends.com](http://blaynebehrends.com)

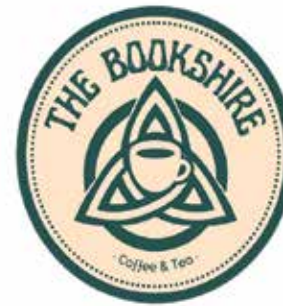
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## River Crossing Antiques

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### Wine-Tasting Hours:

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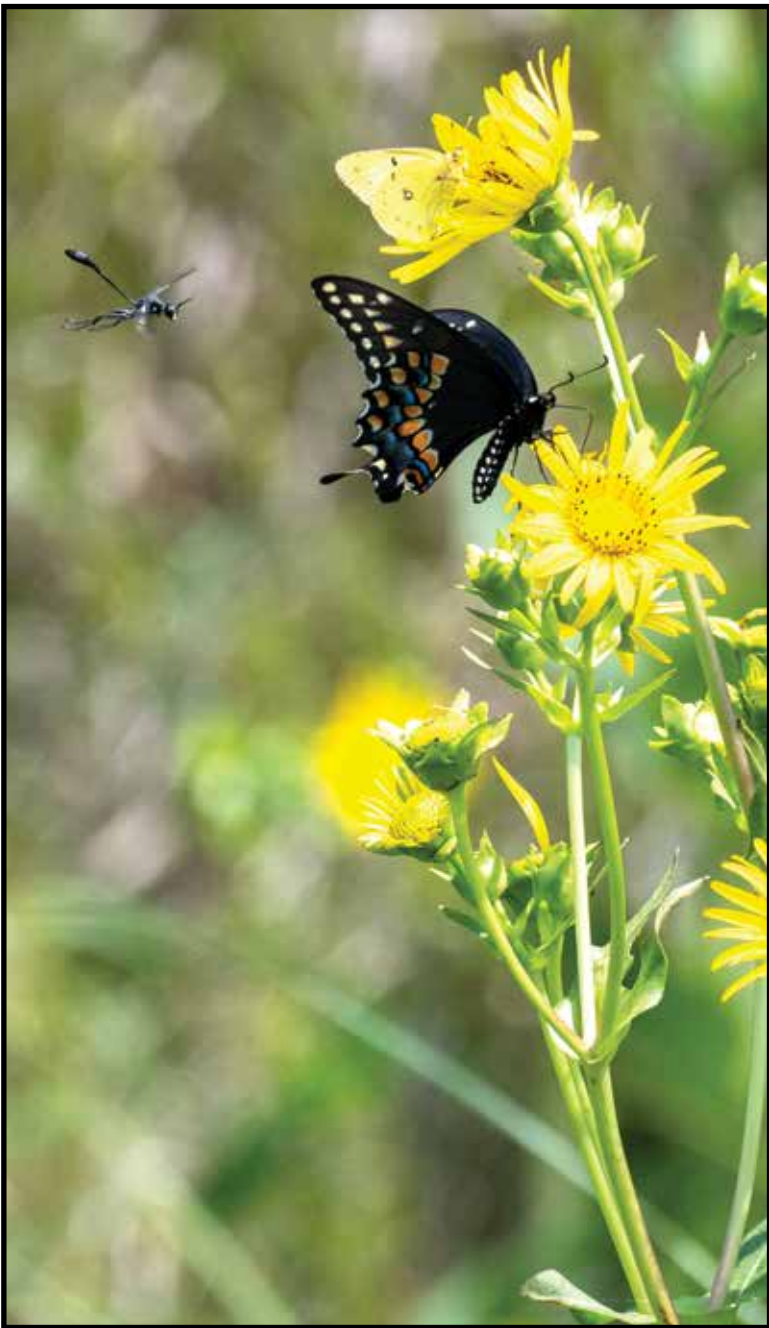
**September Sweetness Has Returned!**  
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Notice the wasp about to attack the Black Swallowtail butterfly. But additional photos show the butterfly was okay. Perhaps the victim was the little yellow one on the top flower.



The Monarchs are migrating! Now through September in Southeast Nebraska.



# HISTORIC BROWNVILLE

Alice A. Minick. September, 1908

"Historic Brownville" of thee we sing,  
Of thy past glory new tributes bring.  
Lo we would not e'er forget their worth,  
No matter where we roam on this earth,  
For hearts are escutcheons of thy fame,  
And love there awakens at thy name.  
I can hear the echoes of long ago,  
And wonder why they've lingered so -  
Forgetful that it's the old sweet song,  
That's been lived and sung so long.  
Heart songs are ever engraven there -  
To live and live on; they grow more fair.  
Youthful memories are golden too,  
For life of youth is to nature true.  
Then of the songs we love the best,  
Are the happy sons of youthful zest,  
And the quaint folk-songs of long ago,  
That Mamma crooned so soft and low.  
Memory recalls their old refrain,  
Oh, how sweet they are when heard again;  
But now we turn from the past awhile,  
Just these passing moments to beguile -  
For remembrances of the past,  
Are shadows that time doth backward cast,  
The future is imagination's dream,  
Of times delusive in the extreme.  
A phantom to allure one from care -  
One we love to follow everywhere.  
The future leaps trouble, toil and pain,  
And paints just pictures of wealth and gain.  
It's the present time - the present hour,  
We speak our love, receive some flower,  
'Tis now we live, we commune, we pray,  
'Tis now God hears us, sees us - yes, today.



## BROWNVILLE FINE ARTS ASSOCIATION

### 2025 Speaker Series & Art Exhibition

#### Speaker Series Schedule

**Saturday, June 21 • 10:00 a.m.**  
**"IN CONTACT WITH NATURE"**  
by Sue Kohles

As a former employee of NSA, Sue is very familiar with the Furnas Arboretum. Her program will include a presentation and a walk highlighting the innate human connection to nature and the benefits of spending time in contact with nature.

**Saturday, July 19 • 10:00 a.m.**  
**"THE CHILDREN'S BLIZZARD"**  
Discussion by Dr. Bill Clemente

Book written by David Laskin. "This account of the 1888 blizzard reads like a thriller." - "Entertainment Weekly" - "...gripping true story of an epic prairie snowstorm that killed hundreds of newly arrived settlers and cast a shadow on the promise of the American frontier. January 12, 1888, began as an unseasonably warm morning across Nebraska, the Dakotas, and Minnesota, the weather so mild that children walked to school without coats and gloves."

**Saturday, August 16 • 10:00 a.m.**  
**"I AM A MAN: CHIEF STANDING BEAR'S JOURNEY FOR JUSTICE"**  
by Joe Starita

Joe Starita tells the enthralling story of how Chief Standing Bear peacefully fought for Native American rights. (Humanities Nebraska)

**Saturday, September 13 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**  
**BROWNVILLE STREET ART & STUDIO TOURS**

Artists will have their studios open for guests as well as other artists visiting Brownville with their works for sale.



**Saturday, September 13 • 10:00 a.m.**  
**CHALK ART DEMONSTRATION**  
by Amy Sell

Amy Lynn Sell is a Kansas City creative artist. She uses the temporary form of chalk to create images that pull you in and make you smile and become part of your experience when you're there.

**Saturday, December 6, 2025**  
**Brownville Tour of Homes**  
**10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**  
**Rohman Garden Tree Lighting**  
**& Christmas Carols**  
**5:30 p.m.**



## Art Exhibition Schedule

### Schoolhouse Art Gallery

427 Main Street • Brownville, Nebraska

Art exhibits open Thursday, Friday, & Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.,  
and Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

If you would like to see the show at other times, please contact 402-414-2082.

**May 29 to June 29**  
**"PAINTS & THREADS"**

by Carol Skinner Hammond

**Artist Reception: Friday, May 30, 6:00 p.m.**

Show includes watercolors and acrylics paintings of florals and landscapes. The stitchery pieces are created from wool, silk, and cotton fibers embellished with hand stitching, beads, buttons, lace, ribbons, yarns, and trims of all kinds.



**July 3 to July 27**

**"CLEARVIEW STAINED GLASS"**  
by Deb Costello

**Artist Reception: Friday, July 11, 6:00 p.m.**

Stained glass transforms light. The constant changing conditions of daylight, coupled with the refractive properties of color, texture, and transparency within stained glass, permeate the space with a constantly changing palette of color. Deb generally uses the traditional medium of leaded stained glass, to create conventional and unconventional glass art. She has also ventured into fused glass (kiln work) as an additional enhancement to her designs. She creates unexpected imagery, hoping to offer the observer a fresh view of this vibrant classical art form.



**July 31 to August 31**  
**"OUT OF THE CHAOS COMES BEAUTY"**  
by Jodie Leibe

**Artist Reception: Friday, August 1, 6:00 p.m.**

Jodie has been creating for as long as she can remember. Ten-plus years ago she started pottery. It has taught her patience and has been a lifeline through many ups and downs. Jodie is grateful to have found a way to bring joy and beauty to herself and share with others.



**September 4 to September 21**  
**"SOME OF NEBRASKA'S FAVORITES"**

**Artist Reception:**

**Friday, September 5, 6:00 p.m.**

Mary Lauber - Jewelry  
Susan Sisco - Pottery  
Natalie Sisco - Glass and Pottery  
Cate Wycoff - Watercolor



**October 7 to November 2**  
**"A SEAT AT GRANDMA'S TABLE"**  
by GK Callahan

Installation includes integrating artwork with elements of corn, pheasants, and a harvest table. There will be story collections, photos and recipes evoking memories of home and the past.



Follow us on Facebook: Brownville Fine Arts Association

## Flatwater Folk Art Museum

*An art collection of vernacular expressions and creations reflecting the human spirit and the passion of common folk celebrating the diverse and universal traditions of life's experiences, ceremony and rituals.*



Open Most Fridays, Saturdays,  
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And by appointments for  
private viewing.

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Walk in or call ahead. No long lines, no hassle.  
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Hours: Mon-Fri 8:30 - 6:00, Sat 8:30 - Noon



**PSC Volleyball August 23**

**PSC 3 -- Sterling College 2**

## PSC Football August 30

**PSC v. Oklahoma Panhandle State University**

**PSC 9 -- OK Panhandle Univ. 10**





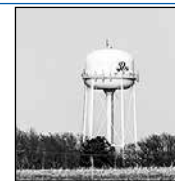
# PERU CITY NEWS

*Communication • Information • Pride In Community*

A volunteer project

supported by the Peru Community.

Thank you to everyone who participates!



## Peru Education Forums (PEF)

Marty Peregoy

### Walkabout Scheduled for September

PEF has scheduled a repeat of the Peru History Walkabout for September 16, from 7:00-8:00 p.m. at Plum Crazy Lady, 620 5th Street in Peru. The forum is free. The first presentation during Old Man River Days (OMRD) was extremely popular, but it posed attendance issues for those who work and mobility issues for those who found walking in the hot sun difficult. The September 16th presentation will take place in the evening, and the organizers hope to be able to provide golf cart/ UTV transportation for those who find walking and standing a challenge.

The forum will be presented by long-time Peru residents Jerry Patterson and Jerry Sayer. It will begin inside Plum Crazy Lady and then will continue outside with a tour of former locations of Peru businesses along 5th Street through several decades.

Attendees can expect to see old photos, maps, and advertisements of former businesses, and they will hear great stories from the memories of the town's longest residents. The program will be interactive, and those with memories that go back decades are encouraged to share their memories as well.

If you happen to have a golf cart or similar vehicle and plan on attending, it would be great if you would offer to let those with mobility issues share your vehicle as you travel up and down the business district.

Several other educational forums have been scheduled for the months of October, November, and January.

Lisa Kastens of Nebraska Medicare

PEF Continued on page 8 >>>>

## The Combs Family of Peru

John C. Chatelain, Omaha

The Combs family were among the group which first arrived at Fort Kearney (now Nebraska City) in 1853. Jefferson Lee Combs and his family had migrated from Peru, Illinois. The name "Jefferson Lee" implies the influence of old Virginia aristocracy, such as President, Thomas Jefferson. The prominent Lee family, included Henry (Light-Horse) Lee of Revolutionary War fame and son, Confederate General, Robert E. Lee. Traveling with the Combs were James Swan and family; Ann Swan; Mr. Mellick and family; Wilson Swan, his son and daughter, Jane; Reverend W.S. Horn and family; Rev. John W. Hall, and the Tate family. 1

Soldiers at Fort Kearney turned the travelers back, because the territory was not yet open. The group journeyed downstream through southwestern Iowa and into Missouri to Sonora Island, across the river from what is now Peru. On the island they built log cabins and snuggled in for the winter. When the Nebraska Territory opened in 1854, the settlers crossed the river and laid their claims. Mr. Combs and wife, Jane, homesteaded on the southwest edge of what is now Peru. At Mr. Combs' suggestion, the group selected the name "Peru" for the town, in honor of his former home. 2

In 1862 Jefferson Lee's son, Monroe Jackson Combs, entered the Civil War with the Second Cavalry of the Regiment of Nebraska Volunteers at the age of eighteen. Once again we are reminded of a prominent Virginian, James Monroe, our 5th President. Monroe Combs married Julia Roberts of Peru, November 6, 1873. Nine children were born to this marriage, including Minnie Jane, Homer Lee, Cornelius, Elmer, Claud, Dora Bell and Sarah Amanda. Monroe's middle name, Jackson, was also significant, since his grandmother, Jean Jackson Combs, was a double cousin of President, Andrew Jackson. Jean's father was John Jackson, an uncle of Andrew Jackson, her mother was Margaret Crawford, a first cousin of Andrew Jackson. 3

Monroe's son, Homer Lee Combs married Della Nincehelter in Auburn, Nebraska in 1899. Homer and Della raised four children, Chester, Bessie, Pearl and Lawrence. Lawrence Combs, born in 1909, graduated from Auburn High School in 1927 and owned businesses in Auburn and Brownville. In 1942 he married Ellen Priest, of Nebraska City before joining the Navy Seabees. While serving with an attachment of the 3rd Marines he sustained an injury on the Island of Bougainville and was flown back to California. Lawrence and Ellen returned to Nebraska in 1944 and settled on a 160 acre farm northwest of Peru. 4

Lawrence and Ellen raised five children, Cheri Lynn (1945), Linda Lee (1946), Martin James (1950), Thomas Dale (1954) and Kelley Sue (1959). Ellen died at age 90 in 2007. Lawrence lived to age 100 and died on Christmas Eve in 2009. Cheri and Nick Pertrillo live in Granite City, Illinois. Linda and Jim Cotter lived in Lincoln for 43 years, but have recently moved to Leominster, Massachusetts. Marty and Karen (Vosberg) Combs lived together in Lincoln, until Marty died of brain cancer at the age of 40. Thomas and Gayle Combs live in Auburn. Kelly and Craig Sea reside in Lincoln. Tom Combs has three children, Rachel, Benjamin and Daniel. Daniel and his wife, Kim, are extending the family's connection to Nemaha County, with their two children, Clayton and Chloe, who live in Johnson, Nebraska. 5

1 The Normal on the Hill, by Ernest Longfellow: p. 4

2 Ibid

3 A History of Nemaha County: p. 136

4 Ibid.

5 Interview with Thomas Combs.



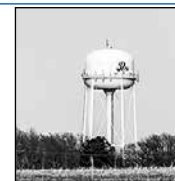
# PERU CITY NEWS

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## Tuesday Literary Club Reads

DiAnna Loy, Tuesday Literary Club

As we come close to the end of our year of senior authors, Renee Szenasi chose to present *Den of Iniquity* by J.A. Jance for our August meeting. Going above and beyond, Renee scheduled a zoom meeting with the author so that we could have the opportunity to get a firsthand look of the author's thoughts and ideas about being an author. It was an interesting experience for our literary group; one that was appreciated by everyone. Listening to Jance for 40 minutes set us up for Renee's overview of the book.

*Den of Iniquity* is a mystery set in the Pacific Northwest. The main character is retired Seattle Police Department Detective J.P. Beaumont, "Beau". This book is actually the 26th book in Jance's series of Beaumont Detective Mysteries but is fine to be read as a standalone novel. Beau is married to Mel who is Chief of Police in Bellingham, Washington where they live just north of Seattle. After his retirement from the Seattle Police Department, Beau has become a private investigator and maintained many of his relationships that he had as a police detective in order to help in his current line of work. The plot of this book is complex but easily understood.

As the book opens, Beau watches as a strange car pulls into his driveway. A young man, who turns out to be his grandson, Kyle steps out. Kyle grew up in Ashland, Oregon, about nine hours away so Beau has seen him only infrequently. Kyle states that he wants to stay with Beau and Mel now. His parents are divorcing, and he has had it with both of his parents. Kyle has recently turned 18 so he is not considered a runaway and can make his own decisions. This is the first Beau or Mel have heard of a divorce and after further discussion between Beau, Mel, and Kyle, they decide he can stay. One of the problems at home is that Kyle was living with his father and his father has moved his pregnant girlfriend into the home. The girlfriend is hardly older than Kyle and when Kyle's father is not present, the girlfriend has been seen coming on to Kyle's friends. Kyle wants to hire Beau to investigate the father's girlfriend because he thinks something is not right. Beau agrees to check on her but will not charge for his services.

Right on the heels of that, Beau receives a call from a friend from his past asking him to investigate what he thinks may be an accidental death. A young man died of a fentanyl overdose but those closest to him are convinced that he would never have used the drug. Something is not right with the coroner's ruling. Beau agrees to look into the case and his investigation leads him to uncover similar mysterious deaths that all have similar patterns. Before long, it appears Beau is on the trail of a serial killer.

How does his investigation of the dad's girlfriend fit into all of these other deaths? Is she who she says she is? Are the deaths related or independent of one another? How does the killer get the information they seem like they could only have gotten from inside the police department? Is the killer working alone or do they have an accomplice?

And will Kyle figure things out with his parents? Will he stay with Beau and Mel? Will he choose to return to living with his father? His mother? This book is worth reading to find the answers.

"Happy reading!"

<<<< PEF Continued from page 7

provider United Health Care will present from 7:00-8:00 October 21, 2025 at Plum Crazy Lady. The annual Medicare open enrollment period runs October – December, and many people have trouble navigating their options on their own.

Lisa will provide information on advantage plans vs. supplements and will also include information for parents/guardians of disabled individuals who may have both Medicaid and Medicare. The forum is free, and a complete agenda will be included in next month's "Your Country Neighbor."

Marilyn Gilbert of Gilbert Auto will present in late November, providing information on basic car maintenance, including changing a tire, jumping a battery, monitoring and adding fluids, and winter safety. Parents should plan to attend with new drivers under the age of 18. This will make an excellent introductory course for anyone who is maintaining their own auto for the first time or a refresher course for anyone who would like to brush up on their basic maintenance skills. This beginner-friendly presentation will be free, and more information on the location will be provided at a later date.

In January, a forum on Basic Facebook for Beginners will be offered in an afternoon class particularly geared toward those who would like to use their smart phones to access City of Peru announcements. The class will make fol-

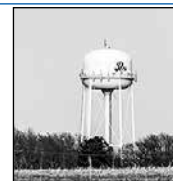
PEF Continued on page 9 >>>>



# PERU CITY NEWS

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<<<< PEF Continued from page 8

lowing what's going on in the city possible for those with little computer/smart phone experience.

Basic on-line safety will be included, as well as information on how to follow other Facebook groups of interest and how to sign-up for services such as My Chart medical records and Social Security information online. The date will be decided once a presenter is identified, and the forum will be free of charge. If you are an accomplished crocheter and would like to present a forum on beginning crochet in February, please contact Marty Peregoy at 402-560-2034 or peregoymarty@gmail.com. There is a growing interest in learning the basics. If you have other topics of interest or skills you'd like to share, please let Marty know. The forum topics are based on the wants and needs of Peru residents.

## *Peru City News*

is a monthly news section in  
*Your Country Neighbor*  
(pages 7,8,9)

*Peru City News*  
is a volunteer project promoting  
**Communication, Information,  
and Pride in the Peru Community**

*Peru City News*  
is supported by  
Peru Community Members.  
Thank you to everyone who participates!

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



St. Clara's Catholic Church  
604 6th Street  
Pastor Fr. Timothy Danek  
Mass - Sunday 8:30 am  
Confessions - Sunday 8:00-8:20 am



Northridge Church  
808 5th Street  
Pastor Daniel Hutchison  
Services - Sunday 10:00 am



Peru Community Church  
520 Nebraska Street  
Pastors Raymond & Rebecca Girard  
Services - Sunday 10:45 am  
**September 2025 Your Country Neighbor 9**



# Hot Summer Deals

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**AKRS**

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Wait  
Sheila Tinkham

There is a time for planting  
There is a time for harvesting  
There is a time to wait  
Wait for the seed to emerge  
Fertilize  
Wait  
May we be like the seeds  
Ready to emerge  
Grow strong  
May we be patient in the meantime  
Wait  
And let the seeds of goodness and kindness take root  
And the crop of happiness and strength and love  
Be gathered in  
Wait

Savannah Banana  
Sheila Tinkham

I am thrilled my home town Savannah  
Made the Wall Street Journal  
Savannah Bananas  
The Harlem globetrotters of baseball  
I love baseball  
I love bananas  
A perfect combination  
But why not the Chiquita Savanna Bananas  
Or the the Dole Savannah Bananas  
Give them a hand  
People are discovering the beauty of baseball  
The all American sport  
Forget the rumor of rounders being the forerunner  
Pure English poppycock  
Go Savannah Bananas!

**This September**



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## A Prairie Love

### Chapter Six: Tracks in the Snow – January 1924

The first week of January brought a sharp wind and a snowfall that made everything seem new. Cora bundled herself in wool and walked to school each morning beneath a sky the color of pewter. The children arrived red-cheeked and giggling, trailing snow behind them like crumbs.

One afternoon, as she rang the bell and stepped inside, she found a folded note on her desk, tucked beneath her lesson plans. It read:

“If the tracks behind the schoolhouse are mine, will you follow them?” —L

She smiled, heart fluttering.

When the final slate had been cleaned and the children had scattered, she slipped outside and looked down. Sure enough, boot prints curved away from the back door and led toward the old grove near the creek. She pulled her scarf tighter and followed.

There, under a bare cottonwood, stood Lyle, stamping warmth into his feet and holding something in his gloved hands.

“I made cocoa,” he said. “Figured you might come.”

They sat on a log dusted with snow. He handed her a tin cup, still warm. They talked about their New Year’s wishes, their favorite Christmas memories, and how winter makes the world seem slower but sweeter.

Somewhere beyond the grove, a windmill creaked in the cold, its steady rhythm like a heartbeat against the hush of snow.

Then he said, “I’ve been thinking about next fall.”

“Oh?”

“If I lease the north pasture, I could build a cabin. Not much, but maybe enough.”

Cora’s breath caught, not from the cold.

“I’d help,” she said.

He looked at her, unsure if she meant the cabin—or more.

She didn’t clarify. Some things didn’t need finishing yet.

They walked back side by side, their boots leaving twin trails behind them in the snow.

*To be continued...*

## Letters from the Prairie

Winter, 1887, Nemaha County, Nebraska

Fourth Letter from Anna Wilhelmine Bauer  
to her sister, Klara in Germany

My dear Klara,

It is Christmas Eve, and I am writing by lantern light, the children asleep upstairs, their stockings hung by the stove with more hope than content. We have no oranges this year, nor peppermint sticks. But I found walnuts, and Lena helped me stitch small dolls from leftover cloth. She has hidden one behind a log in the woodpile, whispering that it’s a secret gift for her brother Jakob. Such tenderness in such a place.

We cut the cedar tree from down near the frozen creek and decorated it with gingerbread, dried apples, and bits of tin. It smells of sap and spice. When Johann lit the little candles, just for a moment, it felt like home again—our old home.

I thought of Papa singing Stille Nacht in his deep voice, and of how you and I used to press our hands together during the last verse. Do you remember? That melody followed me into marriage and across an ocean. I hum it now while stirring porridge or scrubbing the milk pail. It softens everything.

Johann reads the Nativity aloud from the Bible, and we all listen. Even the youngest, who barely understands the words, feels the holiness in them. There is something about a stable and a baby that brings tears more than once in a mother’s life.

Please tell Emil that the harmonica tunes he once played now echo in our parlor. It makes him part of our celebration, whether he knows it or not.

Christmas on the prairie is quiet, humble, and cold—but not without joy. I carry you all in my heart like a song that never fades.

With love and candlelight,

Anna



## Chapter 3: River of Resolve

Spring 1804 – Near St. Charles, MO

The keelboat strained upstream, every oar-stroke a testament to the men’s resolve. Spring rains had swollen the Missouri, and the current ran fast and heavy. Trees, uprooted from far banks, swept past like wayward ghosts. The sky held a steady overcast, and though the wind was at times favorable, progress was slow, and tempers wore thin.

Elias LeGrand, hunter turned corporal, had taken up post near the rudder that morning, watching for snags and floating debris. He was shorter than most of the men but solid, with a chest like a feed barrel and a jaw carved from hard country. His hair, thick and dark, curled over his brow no matter how he fought it back, and he had a tendency to hum hymns under his breath when tension mounted.

This morning, he hummed louder than usual.

Captain Lewis stood amidships, one boot up on a crate, notebook in hand. Clark handled most of the navigation, his voice calm even when the crew groaned or stumbled.

Together, they struck a balance—Lewis the thinker, always observing and jotting; Clark the doer, muscles coiled, a map in mind long before ink hit parchment. “River’s rising,” Elias muttered to himself as a log rolled past. “She’s in no mood to be tamed.”

He wasn’t speaking metaphorically. The Missouri was known to change course, to devour banks and strand travelers. Even the seasoned boatmen the Corps had hired muttered superstitions under their breath.

On the bank, a long stretch of willows bent in the wind. Birds scattered as the keelboat drew near a bend where the water twisted like a coiled rope. A shout came from the forward lookout—“Snag port side!”

Clark barked orders. The men leaned in with their poles and oars, redirecting the boat just in time to miss a submerged tree.

Elias let out a breath. “There’s the first devil of the river, gents. Won’t be the last.”

Later that night, camped on a narrow muddy rise beyond the bend, the men set about their routines—drying gear, cooking salted pork, scribbling letters or journal entries if they could write. A few played fife and drum, and others simply listened to the crackle of the fire, exhausted.

Elias cleaned his flintlock, watching sparks dance in the pit. Nearby, Lewis recorded observations: types of flora, river conditions, bird migrations. The natural world thrilled him—more than Elias could understand—but he respected the captain’s hunger to know it.

Clark made rounds among the men, checking on blisters, giving praise where it was due, and raising spirits with steady words. When he reached Elias, he squatted beside him and nodded toward the river.

“She’s a beast,” Clark said. “But we’ll learn her ways.”

Elias nodded. “I don’t fear her, Captain. But I don’t underestimate her either.”

“Good,” Clark replied, clapping his shoulder. “Men who think like that tend to make it through.”

From his bedroll, York—Clark’s enslaved servant and one of the few Black men among the Corps—muttered, “If the river don’t kill us, them mosquitoes will.”

That drew a round of laughter.

As the night deepened, Elias lay beneath his oilcloth, staring at the stars when clouds permitted. Somewhere ahead was a continent’s worth of unknowns. But for now, they had survived day one on the river.

And that was enough.



# ARBOR CITY NEWS

## *Morton-James Public Library Calendar of Events September 2025*

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](http://morton-jamespubliclibrary.com)

### All Programming is Free and Open to the Public

#### **Library Closed for Labor Day Monday, Sept. 1**

#### **Story Time Cupcake Story Time**

Learn sign language, sing a song, and read books about cupcakes! After that enjoy a cupcake treat and color cupcake coloring pages. Story Times are geared toward ages 2-6. Families welcome!

**Wednesday, Sept. 3  
10:00AM**

#### **Yarn Crafters Club**

Work on your crocheting or knitting from 1:30-3:00 PM on the first Wednesday of each month. 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.

**Wednesday, Sept. 3  
1:30PM-3:00PM**

#### **Humanities Nebraska Speaker: Jeff Barnes**

**The Queen's Road: Nebraska's Bumpy Path to Statehood.** With many historic and colorful images and anecdotes, including rare maps, Barnes presentation covers the second half of the territorial years, examining how and why Nebraska arrived at its present shape, the internal politics which almost brought the southern half to secede to Kansas, our role as a witness to history with the Pony Express, transcontinental telegraph and the amazing "Steam Wagon," the incident that birthed the legend of Wild Bill Hickok and so much more!

**Thursday, Sept. 4  
7:00PM**

**Scrapbooking Club** Bring your own project to work on. We provide papers/stickers/tape/markers/scissors. New members will receive a scrapbook to fill! Bring your own pictures!

**Saturday, Sept. 6  
9:00AM**

#### **Library Board Meeting**

**Wednesday, Sept. 10  
4:00-6:00PM**

**Lego Club** Join us at the Library in the Kimmel Gallery every first and third Monday of the month. Free build with Lego's at the club or bring your own sets to work on. Ages 8 and older.

**Monday, Sept. 15  
3:30-5:00PM**

#### **Day Book Club** *The Lost Bookshop* by Evie Woods

Join the group anytime of year!

**Tuesday, Sept. 16  
2:00PM**

**Story Time-** Get ready for AppleJack with the Apple themed Story Time. Read stories, sing songs, and learn some signs in American Sign Language. Then we will make a paper handprint apple tree craft. Story Times are geared toward ages 2-6.

**Wednesday, Sept. 17  
10:00AM**

**Evening Book Club-** *The Breakaway* by Jennifer Weiner Meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Anyone can join and there is no registration. New members are always welcome! Book lists for the year are available at the Library.

**Wednesday, Sept. 17  
5:30PM**

#### **Harry Potter Party-**

Come and go style Harry Potter Party with Hogwarts themed activities and grab bag! Costumes are encouraged, but not required. All ages welcome.

**Friday, Sept. 19  
6:00-7:30PM**

**Applejack Craft and Color** All ages are welcome to join us to color a wooden ornament for AppleJack.

**Saturday, Sept. 20  
10:00AM-Noon**

#### **Writers Workshop -**

Join us for a roundtable-style writers workshop! Share writing and give feedback to others. Zoom option available. Please email [mjplibraryww@gmail.com](mailto:mjplibraryww@gmail.com) to have a Zoom link sent if you cannot attend in person. Bring a short piece of your writing to share!

**Saturday, Sept. 20  
10:00AM**

#### **Chess Club**

**Every Thursday  
4:00PM-6:00PM**



### **Kimmel Gallery Exhibit for September & October Laurine Oetgen Kimmel**

This 22 piece exhibit showcases her plein air paintings, depicting old barns, song birds, homesteading/pioneer days, and family farmstead outhouses. The exhibit will run September 2 through October 28 and be available for viewing during regular Library hours of Monday-Thursday 9-6; Friday 9-5 and Saturday 9-1.

The free exhibit is open to the public during the listed hours.

**Exhibit courtesy of  
Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts**



# ARBOR CITY NEWS

*News from Nebraska City*

## AppleJack Festival 2025: Making memories sweeter than Caramel Apples!



September in Nebraska City means one thing: AppleJack Festival. Since 1969, the community has celebrated the fall harvest at its local orchards, and in 2025, the beloved tradition returns September 19–21 and September 26–28, promising two weekends of family fun, apple-filled adventures, and community celebration.

At the heart of AppleJack are the timeless traditions families have enjoyed for generations—the parade, car show, carnival, craft fairs, flea market, and apple-themed activities at Kimmel Orchard, Arbor Day Farm, and Union Orchard. Classic treats such as cider doughnuts, caramel apples, and fresh pies

remain a highlight for visitors of all ages. But the festival continues to grow. Arbor Day Farm will feature U-Pick apples, the

Tree Adventure, cider-pressing demonstrations, historic mansion tours, live music, and maker's markets across both

weekends. Kimmel

Orchard & Vineyard will be offering hayrack rides, orchard tours, family education activities, and plenty of fresh apple treats.

Downtown Nebraska City will also come alive with special events the second weekend. The Apple Jamboree

returns September 27–28 with kids' carnival games, art, a petting zoo, and children's activities.

Adults can take part in the AppleJack Cider Stroll and sample apple-inspired drinks

while enjoying live music in the beer garden on Central Avenue.

Food remains a centerpiece of AppleJack, from festival food trucks to orchard kitchens serving inventive

apple dishes. Visitors can enjoy

everything from "Walking Caramel Apples" to sit-down meals infused with fresh, local harvest flavors.

With two weekends of activities and perfect timing alongside Nebraska's fall traditions, 2025 is expected to draw tens of thousands of visitors from across the region. As organizers remind guests, "The festival is to celebrate the apple harvest and have fun making memories while doing it."

**Complete Schedule of Events at:**  
**[www.NebraskaCity.com](http://www.NebraskaCity.com)**

**Orchards Open  
ALL Weekend**  
Arbor Day Farm  
Kimmel Orchard  
Union Orchard



**SEPTEMBER  
19-21 & 26-28**



# ARBOR CITY NEWS

*News from Nebraska City*

A poster for the Apple Jack Festival in Nebraska City. The background is a dense field of red apples. In the center, a large green apple outline contains the text "APPLE JACK festival" in red and black. Above it, the Nebraska City logo (EST. 1854 NEBRASKA CITY TOURISM & COMMERCE) is visible. To the right, four Polaroid-style photos show festival activities: a boy eating, a caramel apple, a fairground with a Ferris wheel, and a red wagon. Below the photos, the text "Making memories sweeter than Caramel Apples!" is written in a cursive font.

**September 19-21 & 26-28**

**APPLE JACK festival**

*Making memories sweeter than Caramel Apples!*



A guest in Sara Velder's home never worries about being too cold. Sara, right, gets a little help from guild member Laura Grundman as she flips through the many beautiful quilts she keeps on top of the beds in her home's guest rooms. Story on page 16. >>>>>>>

A poster for the Heartland Workers Center (HWC) OSHA training program. The poster has a yellow and black striped border. It features the HWC logo and the OSHA logo. The text is in Spanish and English. It mentions "10-HRS DE ENTRENAMIENTO OSHA EN ESPAÑOL INDUSTRIA DE LA CONSTRUCCIÓN" and "El Instituto de Entrenamiento de Salud y Seguridad es un programa del Heartland Workers Center". It also states "LIMITE DE 20 PARTICIPANTES" and provides contact information: "Para más información visite: heartlandworkerscenter.org" and "Email: hsti@OSHABilingualTraining.org".

**HWC** Heartland Workers Center

**Mantenga su lugar de trabajo seguro, saludable y productivo**

**10-HRS DE ENTRENAMIENTO OSHA EN ESPAÑOL INDUSTRIA DE LA CONSTRUCCIÓN**

El Instituto de Entrenamiento de Salud y Seguridad es un programa del Heartland Workers Center

**LIMITE DE 20 PARTICIPANTES**

Para más información visite:  
**heartlandworkerscenter.org**  
Email: hsti@OSHABilingualTraining.org

## *Arbor City News*

a monthly news section in

*Your Country*

*Neighbor*

A Nebraska Regional

Magazine (w/News)

Your Country

Neighbor

is online at;

[yourcountryneighbor.com](http://yourcountryneighbor.com)



# ARBOR CITY NEWS

*News from Nebraska City*

## Heritage Guild News

Nancy Feeney, Nebraska City

### Featured Quilter Sara Velder Brings Talent and Whimsy to Heritage Needlework Guild's Apple-Jack Show

(See photo page 15.)

This year's Quilt and Needlework Show will be in a new location . . . First Evangelical Lutheran Church, 315 S. 16th St., Nebraska City. This three-day show runs Friday, Sept. 19th, 4 to 7 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 20th, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, Sept. 21st, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This year's Raffle Quilt is called "A Quilters Neighborhood." Several months ago, the 65 Guild members were asked to create varied house blocks for this year's raffle quilt. When you look at these 225 individual houses on this 82 x 104-inch quilt, you might see your own neighborhood on display. Guild members gathered to stitch these houses into rows for the quilt, just like neighbors getting together to make their community more beautiful. The raffle quilt was eventually finished and quilted by Guild members Anna Sasse and Shelly Clark.

The extremely popular Raffle Baskets are back again this year. These baskets are created by Guild members and contain a variety of items and sewing goodies based on varied themes, such as Baby, Christmas, Huskers, etc.

Tickets for all raffles are \$1 each or 7 tickets for \$5.

Since the Guild's member-made potholders have become such a huge hit with show attendees, they will be back this year. These creative and sometimes entertaining potholders make handy gifts for many occasions, such as Christmas, birthday, Mother's and Father's Day and wedding showers. After all, everyone must occasionally cook!

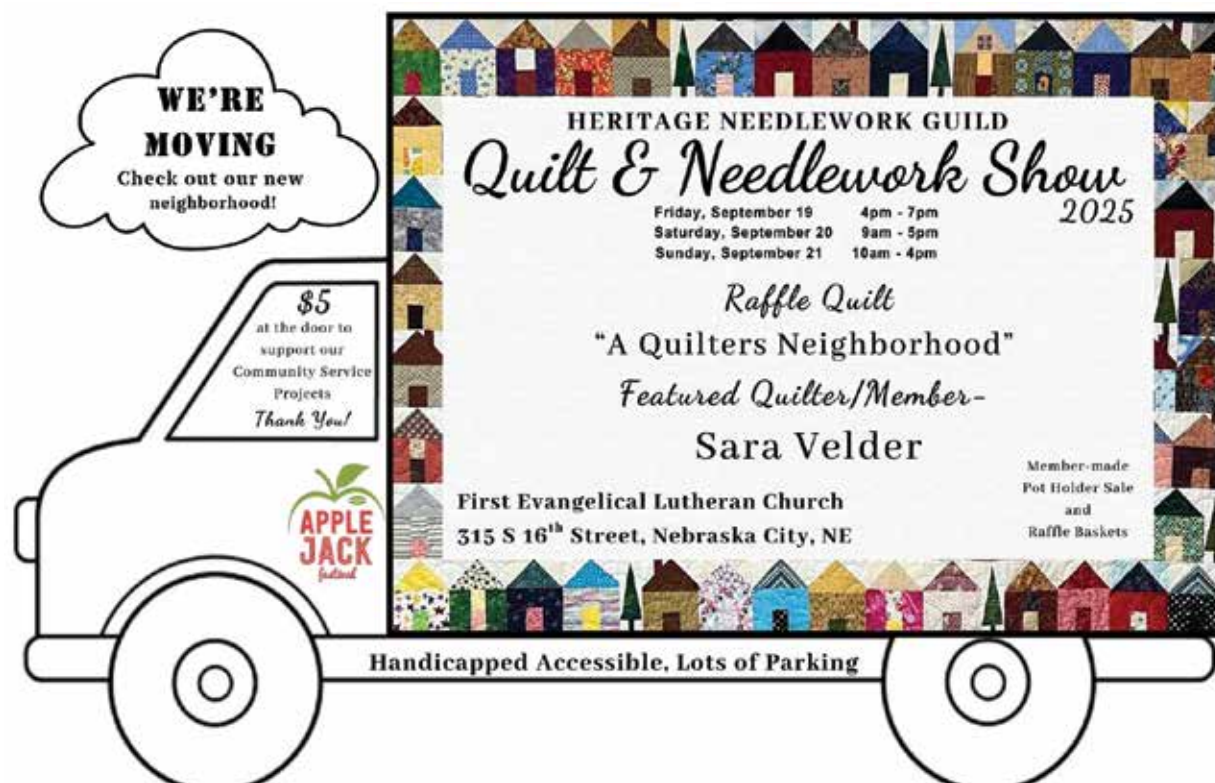
Entry fee for this show is \$5 at the door, which is used to support the Guild's community service projects.



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**WE'RE MOVING**  
Check out our new neighborhood!

**\$5**  
at the door to support our Community Service Projects  
Thank You!

**APPLE JACK**  
Festival

**HERITAGE NEEDLEWORK GUILD**  
*Quilt & Needlework Show* 2025

Friday, September 19 4pm - 7pm  
Saturday, September 20 9am - 5pm  
Sunday, September 21 10am - 4pm

**Raffle Quilt**  
"A Quilters Neighborhood"  
Featured Quilter/Member-  
**Sara Velder**

First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
315 S 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Nebraska City, NE

Member-made  
Pot Holder Sale  
and  
Raffle Baskets

**Handicapped Accessible. Lots of Parking**

Heritage Needlework Guild's "Quilt and Needlework Show"

Moves to a New Location

Nancy Feeney, Nebraska City



## Me and the Kids

Bruce Madsen, Nebraska City

I'm thinking that I need a horse  
Something I can share with the grandkids of course

We can ride to the pasture and check on the cows  
Or just down the road to the neighbors house

A trail ride could be a week-end plan  
An overnight campout with food from a can

The stars overhead and the moon in the sky  
Just like the cowboys in days gone by

A song we could sing, a cowboy's lament  
Our cowboy songs of a lighter intent

Chase make believe "doggies" down a mountain slope  
Saying, "move along little fellers" and slappin' our rope

But now, we need to break camp and head for home  
Cause your Mom and Dad are probably worried about  
Something going wrong

Our time together was a lot of fun  
Grandpa and the kids bonding as one

An aspect of life with a much simpler view  
That I hope they remember and appreciate too.


---



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One December sunset, geese flying along a Missouri River bluff.



# P o e t r y

by Devon Adams, Nebraska City

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## SMOKE IN THE STARS

Out on the prairies,  
in the sweet curing  
scent of grasses gone  
gold now from summer  
green, drifts a current  
of swirling burned air.  
It softens the sharp  
edges of detail defining  
the distance, until the  
horizon is more of a  
suggestion than a real  
edge, like the details in  
a dream that change  
as your brain tries to  
find its way home from  
confusion. Your nose  
rebels as former trees  
spread their sad smokey  
shadows up into a starry  
night and smudge the  
stars into ghost diamonds.

## TIME TO GO

When brush has  
frost flowers and  
breathing makes  
little clouds, and  
the stock tank is  
covered with a  
delicate skim of  
ice, you will hear  
heart melting cries  
floating through  
the Autumn air.  
Geese are leaving  
in clouds of wings  
to fly on a perilous  
journey to winter  
havens south of  
the killing cold that  
is creeping in like  
a stalking wolf.  
“We have to go,  
to go, to go now!”

## THINK AGAIN

“That’s just the way things are.”  
But sometimes that isn’t true.  
Especially if it is an assumption  
you’ve made in one of the back  
rooms of your mind, the room  
without any access to facts.  
Facts do exist, you know, about  
just about everything, but it’s  
faster and easier to dig into that  
messy stack of opinions lying on  
your brain desk and grab one.  
Good luck with that!

## THE MOON IN VELVET

She is lovely and serene, sitting  
above the spinning earth. Her  
face is a bit cold and aloof. But  
the havoc and chaos on earth  
are beyond her control. One  
day those human maniacs will  
ruin their habitat forever and  
come camping up here in her  
face. But until then, she will  
watch the night, wrapped in  
her black velvet gown, wearing  
stardust and listening to the  
music of the Milky Way.

## SHADOWS AND MIRRORS

Who is that person  
looking back at you  
from the mirror?  
We think we know  
ourselves, but one  
glance and a double  
take, and we see our  
Mom or Dad there.  
A second later the  
vision is gone, but  
the question remains:  
do their shadows  
have a vote in all of  
our decisions as we  
live our own lives?

## By Artist, Devon Adams PENCIL AND WATERCOLOR

### PORTRAITS OF PEOPLE, ANIMALS, & BUILDINGS

*Drawn from your photographs.*



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#### Send to:

Devon Adams

1220 Oak Street, Apt. A, Box 9 Nebraska City, NE 68410

adamsdevon07@gmail.com 402-209-9377



## Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson, Auburn

Hubby and I like to watch the TV series Homestead Rescue. We are frequently amazed at the lack of preparedness of the would-be homesteaders in need of rescue. What were they thinking, buying property sight-unseen? Did they not know there was no water source on their property? No wonder they are desperate for help. These people bear no resemblance to the pioneers who homesteaded the prairies of Nebraska and beyond after passage of the Homestead Act of 1862.

Or do they? I don't really know the success rate of homesteaders who took advantage of the free land back then. I'm guessing many of them were completely unprepared for the conditions they found on their 160 acres.

One common failure of the families on Homestead Rescue is their inability to grow their own produce. Misty Raney (one of the rescuers on the TV program) always comes up with a year-round green house, or a critter-proof enclosure, or a water supply to save the day. When the "rescue" is complete, one assumes the family has the wherewithal to produce enough vegetables to survive the winter.

So, if completely inept homesteaders can accomplish this, what are we doing wrong?

Hubby and I planted lettuce, spinach, green beans, beets, peppers, tomatoes, potatoes, onions, carrots, cucumbers and peas this year in our garden (approximately 600 square feet, so maybe some things were a teeny bit crowded). In addition, we have an asparagus patch, a small strawberry bed and a dwarf peach tree. AND, we got sweet corn and cabbage from friends. Sounds like a lot of food to me. But I'm pretty sure we didn't produce enough to get through the winter. And there are only two mouths to feed here.

The asparagus did pretty well and we were able to share. But the strawberries were hardly worth the backache of picking them. The green beans yield was paltry. The two of us had four meals of steamed beans. They were bland and on the tough side, so I froze the rest for vegetable soup later on. I'm counting on the soup seasonings and slow simmering to make them palatable. The beets yielded a similar amount, not enough to bother with pickling, so I tried blanching and freezing them for borscht. (Google it.) I will have to eat that all myself since Hubby says beets taste like dirt. The peas were pretty much a total fail. The ones we did eat were pale and tasteless, which reminded Hubby of why we hadn't planted any for several years. Peas are definitely off the list for next year. The lettuce, potatoes, and onions yielded well enough to actually share with others and still have plenty for us. The peppers are looking good, but the verdict is still out on the tomatoes, which means there may be little-to-no spaghetti sauce this year. Probably not enough cucumbers to make a batch of pickles, either, though they could rally with cooler temps coming.

I could go on, but that's probably already more than you wanted to know about our vegetable garden. If you're still reading, bless you. My point is, that of the 14 different vegetables and fruits we grew ourselves, only six yielded enough to justify the effort. The free sweet corn friends gave us for freezing is the only item likely to actually last us a full year. If we had been actual homesteaders, we would have been dependent on the kindness of others to avoid starvation.

So what lesson is there in all of this for next year? Grow only the six items that yielded well? (Two of those are the peach tree and the asparagus.) Convert half of the garden space to native wild flowers and feed the pollinators? Plant even more potatoes and give them away? Offer the space (free) to someone ambitious enough to want to grow their own food? Use the space for a chicken coop and "grow" our own eggs, now that chickens are allowed in town?

I guess the hapless homesteaders on TV deserve our moral support for attempting to live off the land. Those who succeed are accomplishing a whole lot more than we have ever managed.

## Window On Fifth Street

Stephen Hassler, Peru

A Monarch butterfly fluttered across my path along H-136 recently. It appeared to be in a hurry, its direction DNA-determined, as if it knows the distance ahead. September has a way of reminding us that time moves whether we're ready or not.

Monarchs are not all that's in motion right now. Students settling into campus. Farmers Markets at their peak. The first brown leaves scratch across the sidewalk and Goldenrod has started blooming again.

The rhythms shift outside my window on Fifth Street too. From the Oak Bowl comes the unmistakable rhythm of Autumn; shouted drills, bursts of applause, and the rallying cry of teammates lifting each other through another hot August workout.

The first home football game marked the end of August, and I brought my camera along. I enjoy photographing Peru State sports, capturing moments like a well-timed pass reception or a volleyball spike. When a photo turns out especially well, I include it in "Your Country Neighbor" as a tribute to the season's students; brimming with energy, ambition, and the early promise of lives just beginning to take shape.

There's something reassuring in the return of these traditions, like the Monarchs, like the start of school, like football weekends. They mark the rhythm of the year, reminding us that some things still come back around.

If September teaches anything, it's that change is steady and survivable. Monarchs make it thousands of miles with nothing but instinct and a helpful breeze. We can make it to October on the same quiet faith, that what carries us this far will carry us a little farther still.

And then what? And then we recalibrate, just like everything else in nature.

October won't trumpet its arrival the way September does, but it will quietly slip in with cooler mornings, darker evenings, and the first woodsmoke twisting from chimneys. Porch hanging plants will begin to look tired. The football schedule will turn serious. The squirrels will grow frantic, burying walnuts before frost.

We'll lean into jacket pockets again. Our appetites will shift toward chili and cornbread. And though we know Winter waits somewhere beyond the pumpkin patches, we won't dread it, not yet. There's time. Time to finish garden chores. Time to root for the Bobcats, the Bulldogs, the Pioneers. Time to trust, that like the Monarchs, the next stretch of the journey will carry us exactly where we're meant to go.





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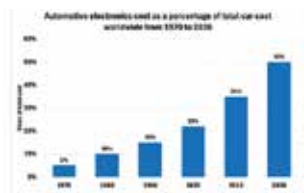
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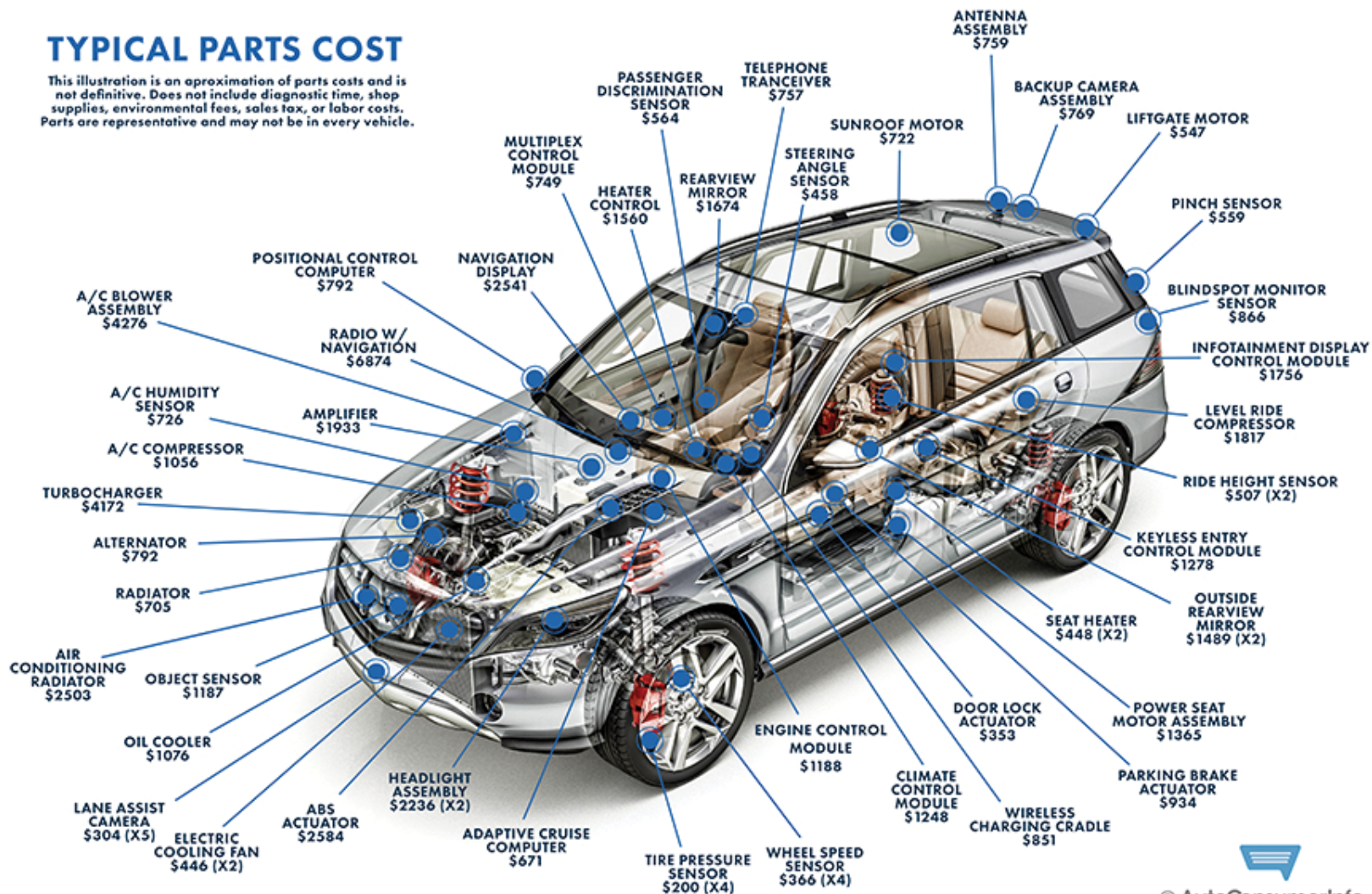
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