



PSC Home Game, March 22.



Sunrise from 5th Street in Peru, Nebraska, March 28th, 2024

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



Sylvie, of the Bookshire Coffee Shop presenting a Ham & Cheese Quiche.  
Visit Bookshire Coffee on Facebook and Instagram. (see page 11)

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

**Auburn • Brownville • Cook • Falls City • Johnson • 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

## Affable April!

A Message from the Publisher, Stephen Hassler, Peru, Nebraska

My birdfeeder needs refilling at least 3 times a week. TSC price was a low \$19.99 for a 40 pound bag of black oil sunflower seed. Their store in Nebraska City makes “Your Country Neighbor” available to its customers.

The Pelicans and Egrets will be arriving at the Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge this month and next. There you might see the Cormorants also.

Most Bald Eagles have left the Refuge and have built their nests, but there are one or two pairs that nest at the Refuge. Their nests are on the west side of the oval drive. Watch for stopped traffic.

So pour a second cup of coffee or tea from Bookshire Coffee in Peru, or Diana's Tea Shop in Papillion, Nebraska, and peruse “Your Country Neighbor” with its magazine articles and poetry, small town news and festivals, and regional photos of wildlife and landscapes.

**Omaha area residents can find “Your Country Neighbor” at Bureikou Tea & More, formerly Diana's Tea Shop, in Papillion.** Peruse YCN while sipping some of their fantastic teas. Their web address is; <https://www.bureikouteaandmore.com/dianas-tea>. **Find Bookshire coffee on Facebook.**

Enjoy your April, watch for butterflies, enjoy Arbor Day, and don't forget to clip the **Valentino's coupon** on the back page. **Carry it with you!**

Stephen

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## Four Gain 2024 Peru State College Alumni Excellence Awards Ceremony Tuesday, April 9

Distinction in their chosen careers has earned four Peru State College graduates the designation as 2024 Alumni Excellence Award recipients, according to President Michael Evans. The four – each representing one of Peru State’s academic divisions – include Dr. Jeff Dahms from the Graduate Studies program, The Honorable Randy Reeves from the School of Professional Studies, Christopher Stangl from the School of Arts and Sciences, and Kim Vrtiska from the School of Education.

They will be recognized during a ceremony Tuesday, April 9 on the campus of Nebraska’s first college. All will be given opportunities to speak with students during their time at the college. **The awards ceremony begins at 2:00 pm in the College Theater and is open to the public.**

“The Thousand Oaks Award honors alumni who have gone on to impressive careers, and this year’s honorees exemplify what it means to excel professionally while also giving back to their communities,” said Peru State President Michael Evans. “I am delighted that the College is giving this award to such truly deserving alumni.”

Established in 2018, the Thousand Oaks Alumni Excellence program is sponsored by the Peru State College Foundation. Candidates must have demonstrated exceptional service to the College and/or community and have noteworthy achievements in their careers.

Nominations are reviewed by the Deans of the respective academic schools at Peru State, by a group of Foundation officials and alumni, and finalists’ names presented to President Evans and his cabinet for final approval.

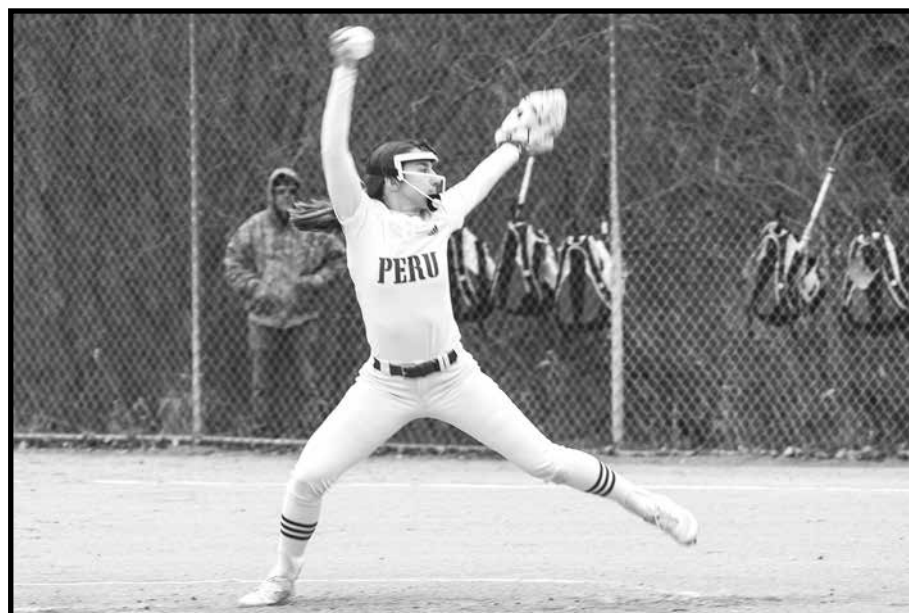
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Men’s Baseball



Men’s Baseball



Women’s Softball

# Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson, Auburn

Well, the calendar has caught up to the weather at last: it's officially Spring. As I write this on March 22, a few of my daffodils are blooming, though most are still cautiously keeping their buds wrapped up, anticipating lingering, intermittent overnight freezes. I have largely followed their lead, leaving some leaf cover in place. Even so, tulips, hyacinth and daylilies are all pushing through that layer of insulation.

A few pollinators are out already, too. I saw a couple of tiny butterflies around the pussy willow shrub. And I spotted a small Bumble Bee of some sort drifting among the purple winter creeper vine on the slope in front of our house – perhaps a Queen emerging from hibernation in search of a suitable cavity to construct a nest.

But that's enough of butterflies and bees. Let's move on to a really fun topic: home repair.

Late last summer, we had a concrete leveling company do some work on our driveway, which was starting to look like a mini-mountain range in the making, what with several sections sinking at one corner and pointing up at the opposite corner. It was a tripping hazard, not to mention a challenge to scooping snow, and it just looked crummy. The concrete experts theorized that the cause of the shifting was runoff from a downspout at the corner of the driveway. Said downspout runs under the patio and then simply flows out underground right next to the south edge of the driveway, presumably undermining the soil beneath the concrete. Hubby and I suspect 13-lined ground squirrels may also have tunneled under there, as they have in other areas of our yard. A pox on those critters!

The solution the experts recommended was to install a catch basin below the level where the downspout empties into the lawn, and then bury an actual drain tube connected to the catch basin and run that across the lawn at an angle away from the driveway, finally emptying out into a landscaped area that slopes away from the driveway.

That seemed logical and relatively straight-forward. The trench needed to be only about 20 feet long and eight inches deep to accommodate the tube and leave adequate depth for sod over the tube. Hubby researched the project online and ordered the catch basin. We cobbled together some tubing we already had

with an additional piece we had to buy and felt confident we could do this job ourselves.

But, as Hubby likes to say, "Nothing's easy and there's always something."

Keep in mind, this is a retro-fitting project. Our builder should have installed this drain tube when the house was built, but he apparently failed to properly observe the natural flow of rain water in front of our house. First, some rain runs right off the south side of the driveway. More rain flows downhill toward the driveway from the south, in addition to what drains out of the aforementioned downspout, right alongside the south edge of the driveway. Triple threat in a downpour.

Digging the trench was largely Hubby's job, though I helped with the work that required kneeling. As I have mentioned in previous columns, Hubby has the muscle and I have the flexibility. I also interjected suggestions and questions periodically, but we don't need to say too much about that. Sometimes these husband and wife projects go a little sideways before they finally get done.

Remember that landscaped slope I mentioned? Well, it is planted with the purple winter creeper vine I noted in paragraph two above. Said vine was planted for its erosion control properties, which are largely attributed to the many and massive roots it establishes over time. As we got closer to the slope, we began to encounter those roots under the sod. Hubby could drive the spade through the small ones, but those big ones were like tree roots.

Picture Hubby standing on that slope, his feet entangled in the vine's many branches, wielding a very large ax, while I attempt to hold back the vines so he can get a good swing at the inch-and-a-half diameter roots. We had to resort to whacking out a fair amount of vine to accomplish the task. Not to worry though, that vine is extremely prolific. A month from now the thin area will be filled in.

Before replacing the sod, we ran water through the downspout to be sure it actually drained as required. Water flowed out, so we called it good and finished up.

The real test will come in the first downpour when we see how forcefully water gushes out of the tube. Let's hope we don't end up with a pond at the base of the slope.

# Drink Responsibly ARRIVE HOME SAFELY!

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# Conference Champions!!



The Peru State Men's Basketball Team won the Heart of America Conference Tournament after taking on Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas. The Bobcats took the win in a thrilling battle with seven lead changes, but the Bobcats pulled out the win 63-59. Congratulations to Coach Roman Gentry and the Bobcat team!



## Awakening

Originally printed in "The Jewish Press," 12-29-23

Janet Sobczyk

This Catholic stayed in small Christian groups  
values and traditions seldom challenged  
comfortable sharing faith  
while agreeing with one another.

A summer move changed perspective  
brought into view a synagogue, new neighbors  
an elderly Rabbi, his kind wife with small dog  
quietly living their faith.

Friendly waves  
conversations by the mailbox  
Rabbi's warmth, gentle advice, hardy hello's  
led to learning about their faith.

One cold morning garbage truck roared by me  
coat over pjs, dragging cans too late  
"Bring'em over here, truck circles back for our side,"  
offered Rabbi. I smiled.

Another day on drive home  
my husband saw Rabbi walking alone  
when offered a ride, politely declined  
"No, thank you, it's the Sabbath."

My own awkward gesture  
a plate of plane, round cookies in December  
wife's delighted response: "Christmas cookies!  
I haven't had these in ages."

Her reaction settled insecurities  
sparked curiosity and conversation  
misconceptions gently nudged into  
understanding.

Next December Rabbi came  
with store-bought Santa cookies  
explained kosher foods  
answered many questions with good humor.

In the spring their basement flooded  
not by seasonal rains, by an unseen hand  
outside faucet turned on in the night  
"We've been targeted before," Rabbi sighed.

Random mischief or persecution?  
Only God knows  
I ponder the meaning of discrimination  
and search my own soul.

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Watch for a visual presentation by Stephen Hassler on

*Butterflies of Southeast Nebraska,*

*Where and When to see them.*

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

# PERU CITY NEWS

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Dogs love the new “BarkPark.” North of Washington on 3rd Street.

You're invited to the 5th semi-annual  
Peru City-Wide Spring  
**Plant Exchange**

Overrun with plants? Come trade your houseplants, annuals, perennials or garden equipment or just donate them to the cause. Plants can be big or small, in dirt or slips rooting in water, and volunteer trees and shrubs are welcome as well. Last half hour no exchange needed; take whatever is left.

**Where:** Outside Peru City Hall – 614 5<sup>th</sup> St.  
Peru, NE

**When:** Saturday May 11, 2024  
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

A colorful illustration featuring a large tree with green leaves, several tulips in yellow, red, and pink, and a white rabbit sitting on the grass.

The Easter Egg Hunt was held on the campus “Quad” this year, and hopefully next year as well.



There were prizes for those who found the shiny eggs.



# PERU CITY NEWS

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## Volunteers

Angela Allgood

Don't get all excited. This is not an article about the University of Tennessee sports teams, "The Volunteers." I am talking about the heart of a community. I am talking activities that get done and not with a wiggle of a wand. I am talking the time, hard work and dedication of volunteers that make these events and activities fun for families and profitable for organizations. Volunteers are people who want to donate their time to help promote a good cause.

Peru has the Easter Egg Hunt with volunteers from the college and the town helping make this activity awesome (and growing each year), the Trunk or Treat event which is again awesome and growing every year, during Christmas, it takes a lot of coordination to get Santa here, we now have movie nights in the summer time, and the biggest event of all is Old Man River Days. That takes a lot of work and volunteers. Each of these events are done for the town of Peru because people (volunteers) care about having fun activities for children and adults. They pour their heart and soul into these events and they need to be recognized and thanked for all the work they do. People have started 4-H programs, not because they have nothing else to do, but because they see a need for this program at Peru. I am thankful this was started up by a "volunteer" as well.

Without volunteers, we would just be saying, "Wouldn't it be cool to have a potluck?" or "Wouldn't it be great to get a slowpitch game going?" Well, once again, we will have summer events continue. Like dodgeball last summer, a group of people (volunteers), got together and just did it. Word of mouth made it catch on very quickly. Now a Recreation Commission has formed and more events will be happening... thanks to volunteers.

Volunteers are always needed. They are needed in your home town and they are needed nationally. You can get involved environmentally, with animals, in Healthcare, sports and leisure and even socially. I have been a volunteer my entire life. I started in high school and continue to this day. I have been a board member, I have been on several committies (writing newsletters, fundraiser, etc.), and I have helped in many ways. I have been with a lot of organizations. As a volunteer, it has to be something you are passionate about. Something you believe in and want to be involved in. When I was younger, I was in a lot of organizations and volunteered for a lot of things. There were things I was really passionate about and things I did to just "help out."

Today, I have focused on two main organizations that are my passion, but I do still volunteer and "help out" with a lot of different programs. My passion (if you read my articles), is reading. I LOVE the Auburn Memorial Library, and because it is near and dear to my heart, I am a "Friend of the Library." Volunteering brings purpose to my life. I am happy that I volunteer and have a positive impact on my community. Volunteering also helps me meet people and find friends that have the same things in common with me.

If you are interested in volunteering locally, there are several places that love working with volunteers. You have the 4-H Club in Peru, Auburn BackPack Program, Firefighter, Red Cross, Rescue Squad, Relay for Life, Project Response, Hearts United for Animals, Neighbor to Neighbor, Library, Southeast NE Community Action, PCIG, Catholic Social Services, Good Samaritan, Meals on Wheels, any of the Churches, and many other organizations. Ask people what they are involved in and see if that is something you would like to do. Not only will it help your community, it can change your life.

## Note to Friends of Peru City News

Stephen Hassler

Angela wanted me to convey to you how disappointed she is that she was unable to accommodate those of you whom she intended to interview for this issue. Her computer stopped working and we all know how frustrating that can be. Plus, Stephen (me), usually has constraints when it comes to how much room is left at the end of the month for articles. Thank you for your understanding.

Angela has volunteered since November, 2021!

## City Council Meeting Notes, March 18

Stephen Hassler

1. There was an update on the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Flood Buyout Program... which I did not understand. I have not heard anything about what's going on at the North end of town.
2. A motion passed, regarding my question as to just what the City was committed to providing for the annual clean-up day. Dumpsters were not included in the vote because they had already been ordered. Fear that City Hall had dropped the ball on this issue was removed shortly after communication was re-opened.
3. City Council is considering a few "raised crosswalks" for the purpose of pedestrian safety.
4. Reading of an ordinance to set truck routes, weight restrictions, and penalties.
5. Marty Peregoy's request for records and other documents was not entertained. One reason given was the label, "disgruntled employee."

(I was once disgruntled by a Peru administration that wanted to move two mobile homes into town. Permits were issued without consulting with the Zoning Commission, for which I was president at the time. Being disgruntled helped maintain proper procedure. The public has a right to keep officials' "feet to the fire.")

Marty was further admonished for not emailing a council member, rather than going through the Clerk's office. But when I personally asked for council members' email addresses so that I could provide them in this paper for the public, I was told availability probably wouldn't go into effect until after the election, and until then use; [cityclerkcityofperu@gmail.com](mailto:cityclerkcityofperu@gmail.com)

6. Adjourned

# PERU CITY NEWS

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## Tuesday Literary Club Reads

DiAnna Loy and Marian Henderson, Tuesday Literary Club

Reckless was a Mongolian horse that went to war during the Korean War; she was a rank holding Marine. There were many books written about her including children's picture books. The one Marian Henderson chose to talk about at our March meeting was *Reckless: Pride of the Marines* by Andrew Geer. The first half of Geer's book is fiction, presenting an account of how Reckless may have lived the first part of her life in Korea before joining the Marines. The second half is a true account of Reckless' time as a war horse with the Marines serving with distinction in Korea. Marion chose to center her talk only on the second half of the book.

Reckless began her career in the Marine Corps in October 1952 when she was purchased by the 75 mm. Recoilless Rifle Platoon of the Antitank Company, 5th Marines. Her boot camp was different from that of the ordinary Marine; she was promoted to the rank of corporal.

It was in the battle for the outpost Vegas that Reckless proved her merit as a Marine. With enemy artillery and mortar rounds coming in at the rate of 500 a minute, she carried 75 mm. shells into the front lines; each yard as a passage under fire. Reckless made a total of 51 trips to the outpost during the Battle for Vegas to keep the guns supplied with ammunition.

Disregard for her own safety and conduct under fire were an inspiration to the troops and in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval Service. Corporal Reckless received her Meritorious Promotion to Sergeant on April 10, 1954. The citation reads in part, "Cpt. Reckless preformed the duties of ammunition carrier from October 1952 to July 27, 1953, in a superb manner. Reckless' attention and devotion to duty make her well qualified for promotion to the rank of sergeant. Her absolute dependability while on missions under fire contributed materially to the success of many battles."

Before Reckless became a war horse, she had been a racehorse, and the Marines were cautioned never to ride her. One afternoon her handler disregarded this caution and swung up on Reckless' back. The minute she felt the weight of a man on her back, she took off at full speed as if she had heard a starter's pistol. Reckless was having the time of her life and she didn't want to stop. Remember they were in a war zone, so this was a bit of a problem. Reckless was eventually stopped but no one ever got on her back again.

The men enjoyed Reckless even though having her in their unit meant extra work. They built her a corral and stable but Reckless would often join them in their mess tent for meals, eating the same things they ate. She would eat nearly anything, including scrambled eggs, beer, Coca-Cola, and once about \$30 worth of poker chips. When it got cold at night, and anyone who has ever served in Korea will tell you that it can get a special kind of cold at night in Korea, Reckless would often leave her stable and join the men in their tents, laying down next to fire to get warm.

She was wounded twice and following the war she was awarded two Purple Hearts, a Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, inclusion in her unit's Presidential Unit Citations from two countries, and other military honors. Rotation to the United States was her due and, in the few weeks, after promotion she was on her way to Camp Pendleton...home of the 1st Marine Division. Gook Luck, Sergeant Reckless, and Bon Voyage.

Happy reading!

## Peru Community Impact Group

Angela Allgood

PCIG has regrouped and is refocused. New board members are Stephen Hassler (Chair), Julie Coatney (Vice Chair), Miranda Decker (Secretary/Treasurer), Ken Curtis, and Kirsten Reeves.

The new board has convened and they have finalized their new direction. The board members have committed to four meetings a year, they will review financials and make sure that they are in compliance with their nonprofit status, and they will review all event requests and approve or deny requests for money. Their vision is to make a collective impact toward community engagement resulting in the growth and success of Peru and its residents and their mission is to impact the community through engagement opportunities, programs and services benefiting residents of Peru and its visitors.

PCIG will also raise funds to assist with the Easter Egg Hunt, Old Man River Days, Trunk or Treat and the Christmas event (possibly others). Volunteers who plan to hold an event in Peru are invited to submit an application for funding to [perucig@gmail.com](mailto:perucig@gmail.com). One way that PCIG is currently raising funds, is with t-shirts. "Scarlet + Green" helped with the design. Go to <http://peruproud2024.itemorder.com/> and place your order today! You can also donate through PayPal, Venmo, or with cash and check and mail them to:

Here are the major events that PCIG expects to sponsor:

Egg Hunt - March 23rd

Old Man River Days - June 7-9th

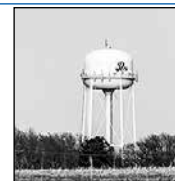
Trunk-or-Treat - October 27th

Community Christmas - December 8th(?)

If you are interested in doing your own event please fill out the request form. The event must benefit the community of Peru and fit the mission and/or vision of the Peru Community Impact Group (PCIG) to be considered for funding. Email [perucig@gmail.com](mailto:perucig@gmail.com) with any questions.

# PERU CITY NEWS

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## Bookshire Coffee Shop on 5th Street next to Caseys

Angela Allgood's Interview with Manager, Sheldon Shires

Angela: What made Preston want to turn a car wash into the Bookshire?

Sheldon: Well, there were several factors involved. First off, Preston just loves new and unusual projects, and he likes to entertain others. Secondly, Sylvie, who loves people and to interact with them, had stopped teaching and Preston thought that she might enjoy reaching out to others by having a tea shop like her great-grandmother had in Angouleme, France back in the 1890s. So, when Preston saw the car wash was up for sale, he came home and told Sylvie that if they bought it they could transform it into a coffee and tea shop as an outreach to students at Peru State, and to the community at large. One obstacle was that they didn't have the money and secondly, as Preston was teaching in Lincoln at the time and also farming while restoring the Nace House in Brownville with Sylvie and both were writing books, the coffee shop idea seemed like a bit much to put on their plate, at least Sylvie's plate. So they put it to God that if they made an offer that didn't put them into debt, and it was accepted, then they'd take it as a sign to go ahead with the project. Apparently, God knew that they had more room on their plate.

Angela: The woman who was on FB as server (or Barista) who is she and is she going to be the server?

Sheldon: Our soft open post featured my sister-in-law Tammy Shires. She is a teacher and coach at Nebraska City High School, and will also be working Saturdays at the BookShire.

Angela: You took four years. What all had to be done? What was your biggest problem?

Sheldon: Our biggest problems were surprises. Things that had to be done that Preston and Sylvie did not suspect. For starters, the car wash had the wrong voltage, so that had to be transformed from 203 to 220/40. Second, the power line had to be buried or we would never be able to have a drive thru, which will be coming later on. Third, the sewer line was lower than the Peru sewer system, so we needed to put in a tank and an expensive pump. What took up most of the time, however, was waiting on certain contractors, albeit Wilson Electric, Titus Construction, and Airstream Plumbing and some others, like Tom Combs Electric, were very responsive and timely. Of course the car wash had to be

dismantled and cleared, which is something Preston did. Preston and Sylvie, along with their kids and grandkids, did much of the floor tiling and the interior construction work and decorating, but Titus Ganger built the addition, which encloses an office, restroom, and an alcove. Most of the furnishings and much of the equipment was purchased at auction. The final problem for Preston and Sylvie to solve was learning how to run a coffee shop, which was a completely new experience for them. Things lined up, however, to allow me to move down from Nebraska City and go part-time at my current job so I could take over management of the BookShire on their behalf.

Angela: What are your hours going to be?

Sheldon: We are all new to this business and learning as we go, so for the next couple weeks or so we will have limited hours from 12-4 Sunday and 10-2 Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Once we are in full swing, we will be open at 6 instead of 10 during the week and on Saturdays.

Angela: What are you going to have? Coffee, tea, soups, sandwiches???

Sheldon: We have a robust drinks menu, including staples like lattes, mochas, and hot teas, as well as trendier favorites like matcha, chai, and cold brew, plus a handful of specialty drinks that we're particularly proud of, like our French Toast Latte or our caffeine-free Strawberry Sunset. We'll also have seasonal menus and occasional features, like the non-alcoholic Irish cream we featured on St. Patrick's Day. As far as food goes, we are currently offering baked items like coffee cake, cookies, and French tea cakes, all made from scratch, and will be expanding those options gradually.

Angela: You are going to manage it; what relation are you to Preston?

Sheldon: I am the youngest of Preston's three sons. I am new to the coffee business but have several years of hospitality management experience, including bartending, restaurant operations, and food & beverage administration.

Angela: Eventually hire help or not?

Sheldon: We have already hired a couple wonderful Peru State College students who will start training very soon, but are always on the lookout for enthusiastic help! Our eventual goals include a drive-thru and a few evening activities, so the more help we have, the sooner we can reach those goals!



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

April 2024

Your Country Neighbor 11

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# The Real House, in Black and White

Frieda Burston

I had always had Black friends, although my mother called them “colored folks” and our more courteous neighbors called them “darkies”. It was only after Integration that we learned to say, “Black.” In the St. Joe of the 1920s and 30s, “Black” and “Negro” were dirty words, and shocked people just as if you had said “underpants” instead of “unmentionables.”

But whatever the name, the process was the same in St. Joe. Whether it was Aunt Mandy and Uncle Tom in the House by the Tracks, or my street-car friends when we lived in the House With the Garden, there was always somebody to tell me stories of the Old Days. Some stories were of Slavery Times, other stories were of Civil War Times.

These were like fairy tales to me. I knew St. Joe as it was, not as it had been, a town torn apart by a history of slavery and separated only by the Missouri River from the Free State of Kansas. I could read “Tom Sawyer” and imagine N-- Jim, but I could not imagine him in St. Joe. He was simply an artifact of Mark Twain, just like a Minstrel Show wasn't really slave music but slave music through Stephen Foster's head.

When we moved to the real house when I was almost 14, I found myself in a new situation. Our end of the block was lower-middle-class White. The other end of the block was middle-and-lower-class Black. At the top of the hill in the middle of the block, sat a huge old Victorian mansion with a street light in front of it.

In that mansion lived an upper-class Black dentist and his family of six children. One was a girl my age named Illy. Naturally I talked with her. Since I talked with all the children on our side of the hill, pretty soon all of us were going up in the summer evening to sit on the curb under the street light and swap children's lies. Pretty soon a lot of the children from the black side of the hill came up to listen to us and pass the evening sociably too. Nobody's mother said we couldn't. Everybody's mother knew we did. It was a good arrangement for everyone because we were out in the open under the street light, making a lot of happy noise, and everyone knew we were safe and out of trouble. There were problems only once—

Mama asked me, “What are you telling the children? Mrs. Hill says Joe-boy came home and told her that everyone is stuffed with hamburger, and her neighbor's girl came home and said that we have two different-colored rivers running through us, and she wanted to know if the fish were colored too—”

I was embarrassed. “Mama, Joe-boy skinned his knee and was crying, and I tried to stop his crying by showing him how red his meat was under the black skin, and I told him that all of us look alike under the skin, we're all red no matter what color the top is—”

“And the rivers?” Mama asked.

“That was Illy, Mama. She brought out her father's picture book about bodies and tried to explain why our flesh is red, the picture showed the blood going to the heart was red, and coming out it was blue— or maybe that's backward“

“It's a good thing the summer is almost over,” said Mama. “You girls are acting like you're college professors already, and you're both still dummies—”

When September came, Illy and I walked to school together, picking up my new friend Margaret on the other side of the avenue below us. We walked Margaret to the Convent, then I walked Illy to Lincoln High, then I walked alone to 9th grade at Roubidoux downtown. None of us questioned this. This was the way it was. Illy and I could sit on the curb together, or we could sit together on a streetcar, but we didn't sit together in school. This was the way of the world, and it never occurred to us to question it.

What Illy and I both questioned was whether public education was as good as parochial school education. Margaret was reading a tragedy about a girl named Iphigenia in Latin, while Illy and I were stuck in Caesar's war letters home about Omnia Gallia being Divisa in Tres Partes. Illy and I both felt short-changed and abused by this, and wondered if Margaret had other advantages at the Convent that we were being denied.

Margaret, for her part, felt abused because we could wear lipstick if we wanted to, while she had to wait until she was out of sight of the Sisters before she could put it on. This didn't bother us. Illy said she'd look like a clown with lipstick, and I said nothing.

High school passed, Illy went away to university somewhere in the North, Margaret got a job selling cosmetics at Woolworth's, I went to Junior College in St. Joe and then down to Columbia to Missouri University. Life went on as it always had, until the spring of 1940. That was when my life went out of technicolor and slipped back into black and white.

Five of our students were sent from MU to a Social Work Conference in Topeka, Kansas. I was one of them. One of the students drove. We stopped for lunch at a small country inn, and waited long enough for them to have slaughtered the cow before we were given the meat-sandwich and potatoes-in-gravy that used to be standard fare before hamburgers became popular.

So we were late getting to the Conference. When we walked in, almost all the seats were taken. There was one seat in the front row, and enough seats farther back for all of us if we were willing to be separated. There was one drawback: Each empty seat was next to a student of color.

We stood there at the door in dismay and looked over at the audience, and the audience sat there and looked at us. My classmates moved over to stand by the wall. I stood there, rooted to the floor. If I moved over with them, I was saying “I am in enemy territory. I will stand my ground here by the wall, but I will not be a traitor to my upbringing.”

But what had my upbringing been? I heard Mama's voice echoing through the years, “When in doubt, do the polite thing.” The girl in the front row was looking at me. I did the polite thing. I walked out to the front row, smiled at her, said, “May I?” politely, and sat down. She smiled back and that was it. We didn't look at each other again, we were both busy taking notes on the big speeches.

I lived through it. Did I feel virtuous? No.

# ARBOR CITY NEWS

## Morton-James Public Library Calendar of Events April 2024

All events are free and open to the public. April events take place at MJPL, 923 1st Corso

### Rainy Days Story Time

Wednesday, April 3

10:00 AM

Ages 2-6. Families welcome!

### Yarn Crafters Club

Wednesday, April 3

1:30-3:00 PM

Ages 19 and older

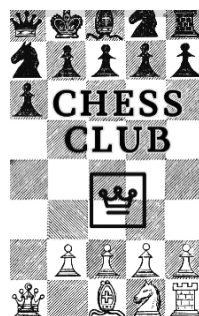
Bring your projects to work on or come learn!

### Chess Club

Every Thursday

4:30-6:00 PM

All ages



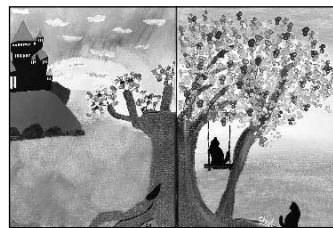
### Humanities Nebraska-

#### Lonesome Dreamer: The Life of John G. Neihardt

Timothy G Anderson

Thursday, April 4

7:00 PM



### Paint Together -Trees

Saturday, April 6

10:00-Noon

Materials provided-must have a partner

Ages 8 and older

### Card Club

Thursday, April 11

1:00-3:00 PM

Ages 19 and older

### Young Adult Trivia Night

Friday, April 12

5:00-7:00 PM

Ages 16-19

### Book Club - The Noise

by James Patterson

Tuesday, April 16

2:00 PM

### Bicycle Themed Story Time

Wednesday, April 17

10:00 AM

Ages 2-6. Families welcome!

### Evening Book Club - How Lucky

by Will Leitch

Wednesday, April 17

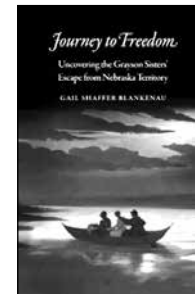
5:30 PM

Gail Blankenau Book Talk

### Journey to Freedom: Uncovering the Grayson Sisters' Escape from Nebraska Territory

Thursday, April 18

7:00 PM



### Tween Trivia Night

Friday, April 19

5:00-7:00 PM [Grab your reader's attention with a great quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point. To place this text box anywhere on the page, just drag it.]

Ages 11-15

### Writers' Workshop

Saturday, April 20

10:00-11:00 AM

### Poetry Slam

Sunday, April 21

2:00-5:00 PM

Ages 15 and older

Prepare 3 original poems to read, share your work with audience and judges. Check our Facebook page or call for more information. 402-873-5609

Stop in to pick up an **Arbor Day** gift from J. Sterling Morton... a seed packet to grow your own wildflowers.

Pick up the week of April 22-27 in South Lobby by the Statue.

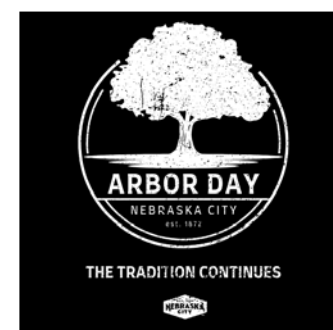
### Library Closed for Arbor Day

Friday, April 26

### Craft & Color

Saturday, April 27

10:00-11:00 AM



# ARBOR CITY NEWS

Nebraska City Tourism & Commerce



Left: The Arbor Lodge mansion is framed by soft apple blossoms.

Above: Each year, the chosen Arbor Day Honoree plants a tree at a special Commemorative Tree Planting.

## SPRING BRINGS ARBOR DAY TO NEBRASKA CITY

Nebraska City is gearing up to celebrate its hometown holiday - Arbor Day - once again this April! The dates this year are April 26 - 28.

The first observance of Arbor Day was April 10, 1872, as proposed by Nebraska Citian J. Sterling Morton. In the decades since, Nebraska City, Nebraska itself, the rest of the United States, and even many foreign countries have honored the tradition in their own ways. Nebraska City's history has included a Children's Program, a Tree Planting, a Fun Run, a parade, a BBQ, and more.

This year, most of Nebraska City's popular traditions are returning. On Friday, April 26 (Arbor Day itself), grade schoolers from town will gather on the lawn of Arbor Lodge for an entertaining and informative Children's Program. Each student will be given a free tree seedling to plant. Later that day, the 2024 Arbor Day Honoree will be recognized

at a Commemorative Tree Planting. The next morning, festivities begin early with a 5K Fun Run on the Arbor Day Farm Conservation Trail. That's followed by the Home, Craft, & Garden Fair at the Eagles Club all day. At 1 p.m. Saturday, the Arbor Day Parade runs down Central Avenue. Saturday's events conclude with an Arbor Day BBQ sponsored by Cargill.

Sunday's main event is the Best of the Midwest Bloody Mary Championship at the Eagles Club. Prize money is given to the Best Bar, Best Independent, Best Overall, and People's Choice.

If you would like details about how to participate in events like the Home, Craft, & Garden Fair or the Best of the Midwest Bloody Mary Championship - or if you'd just like general information on Arbor Day 2024 - visit [NebraskaCity.com/festival/arbor-day](http://NebraskaCity.com/festival/arbor-day).

**"OTHER HOLIDAYS REPOSE UPON THE PAST; ARBOR DAY PROPOSES FOR THE FUTURE."**

**- J. STERLING MORTON**

Below: Little Ted's Pub of Nebraska City won the People's Choice award at the 2023 Best of the Midwest Bloody Mary Championship.





# ARBOR CITY NEWS

Nebraska City Tourism & Commerce

## Continuing the Tradition of Arbor Day in Nebraska City



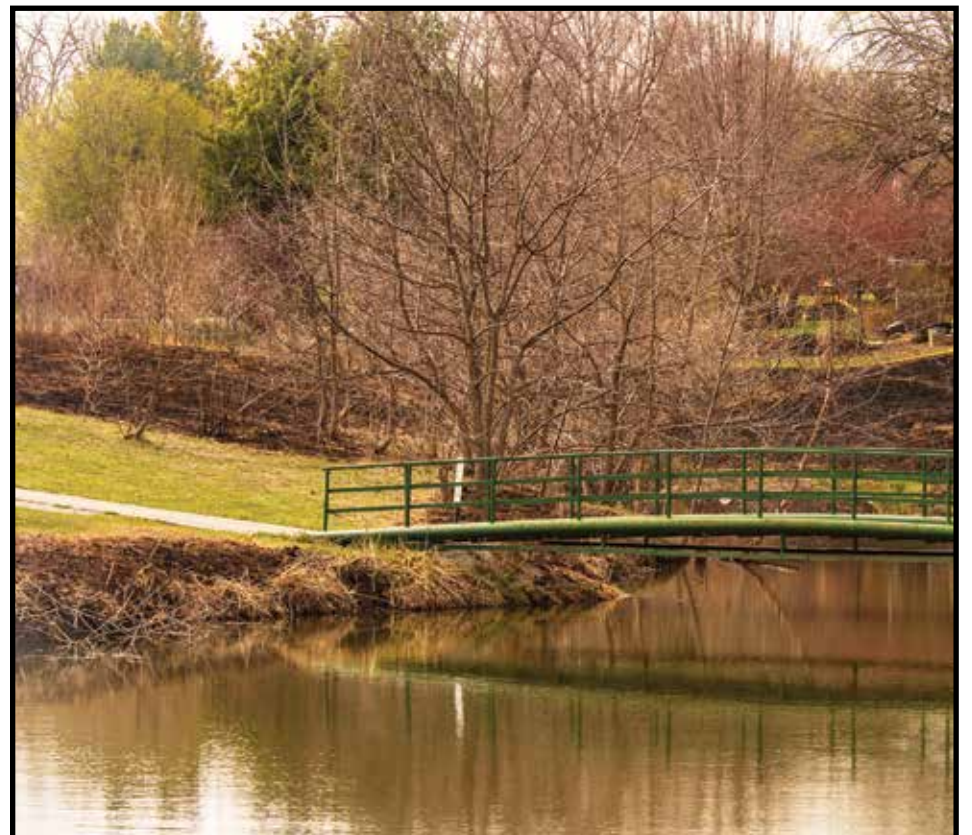
PARADE | FUN RUN | TREE PLANTINGS | FOOD TRUCKS  
SHOPPING | ARBOR DAY BBQ | CRAFT FAIR  
BEST OF MIDWEST BLOODY MARY CHAMPIONSHIP

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Above, blossoming tree south of Spring Garden. -- Right, bridge at Wildwood golf course.

# ARBOR CITY NEWS

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For more information, call Todd at Larson Motors | 402-873-5507



# ARBOR CITY NEWS

News from Nebraska City

## Clouds

by Bruce Madsen



Spring Garden Restaurant, appropriate name at this time of year beneath the tree blossoms.

Your imagination can go awry  
If on a day you can look to the sky  
And see the billowing clouds afloat  
While birds and planes spend time cavorting  
Around the clouds in and out  
Playing hide and seek and flying about

And moving across the sky I see  
Shapes of objects in different degree  
Angels and mountains, the man in the moon.  
And a cloud like the dish that ran away with the spoon  
A mushroom, a tulip, the shape of a horse  
And things that are hard to imagine, of course

And no one sees the same thing twice  
That's why I think that it's so nice  
That God can send in images of white  
Outlines of objects that give us delight  
So when you look up and see the clouds fly  
Test your imagination and give a sigh  
For tomorrow you won't see what you saw today  
But someone will, somewhere else, in another way

**Register for a Spring 2024 Visit Day!**  
Discovery Days: February-April  
Career Days: February-March

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Recreation Dome Construction, February 2024 Aerial Photo by Peru State College Marketing Department and submitted by Ted Harshbarger.



## inspired DENTAL

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## Window From The Past

Stephen Hassler, Peru

About 15 years ago I was sorting through some boxes of personal items which had been stored in my parents' basement while I had been bouncing around the country trying out two or three careers. In one of the boxes I found a diary. It was one I had started during high school. As I read the daily entries, memories of English class, farm chores after school, and late night homework wafted back into my senses. At once, the little book became a bridge across the years. I saw a struggling teenager. A student with a crush on the homecoming queen, a fond affection for his 53 Chevy, and a dream of working at NASA. I was back in time, renewing feelings from a joyous and confusing period of my life, a time when I had a burning desire to escape to a bigger world.

Immediately, I was overcome with a sense of having disappointed that aspiring kid who worked so hard to create something for me, his future self. Instead, I had wandered from his intended path. Just out of college, and pressured by Payments on a new car loan and high auto insurance rates, I had taken the first good-paying job that was offered me; advertising.

I discussed the diary entries with my wife, feeling almost guilty, with an urgency to consider some kind of corrective action. Together we considered the path not taken, and the seeds of a plan to return to college were sewn that very evening.

The satisfying result was not a job in the space program, nor even an application to NASA, but a return to my youthful affection for math and science. I became a math teacher and taught for a dozen years, half of those at Peru State College. Teaching algebra was an unusual platform from which to bounce to another career; writing and creating this publication.

What about your dreams? Of when you were a younger person sometime ago? Do not lament the path not taken. Oftentimes examining the past can motivate some positive change for the present or future. It might not be too late to blaze a new trail. And if it seems as if it's been a long time since opportunity has knocked, then maybe it's time to build a door.

---

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

## Perfume, One Of A Lady's Greatest Pleasures

Dorothy Rieke, Julian

Recently, I viewed a lovely collection of unique and beautiful perfume bottles from the 1930s to the 1960s. Each one was a vision of loveliness.

At that time in history, most women did not have much money for the “extras.” Perfume was an extra after buying shoes, stockings, dresses, and undergarments. The stockings at that time, were made of rayon, the dresses and underwear were made of cotton, and the shoes were often bulky and uncomfortable, but with a bit of perfume, ladies felt as pretty as the movie stars. In other words, perfume made ladies feel better and built confidence in appearance, but it took extra money to purchase a good perfume.

The larger perfume bottles of years ago probably had cheaper contents. Smaller bottles must have been pricey for the amount of contents.

Evening in Paris was THE perfume of the forties and fifties. This floral fragrance was created by Ernest Beaux in 1928. It was discontinued in 1969 but relaunched in 1992.

One of the small bottles of Evening in Paris perfume, long and narrow shaped, made a wonderful gift, and its price appealed to customers.

One Christmas, my sister gave me a small bottle of Evening in Paris perfume. What a joy that was because it made me feel grown up and special!

That particular perfume, for those who wore it, often brought visions of elegant cafes, the Eiffel Tower, beds of flowers, and dancing in the dark.

Christmas brought displays of gift boxes of Evening in Paris perfume at the local drugstore. Those silver gift boxes, decorated with dark blue ribbons, must have sold well as they displayed many silver boxes each holding gifts. The smaller ones with fewer items cost less.

These gift boxes contained not only perfume but face powder and other cosmetics. Some contained a small purse-sized bottle and a larger bottle.

Perfume continues to be popular today. Some of the more expensive perfumes in pretty bottles are available. However, I wonder if Chanel No. 5 will ever reach the popularity heights of the Evening in Paris perfume of years ago.

“Your Country Neighbor” is delivered to the following communities in Southeast Nebraska & Missouri.

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## Optimist

by Sheila Tinkham, Lincoln

I am an Optimist not by nature but by choice  
I choose to have faith in God, in family, in life itself  
But there are people in Denton, Nebraska  
the Kluge Family: Friz and Kerriane and Judith  
That epitomize optimism and the optimism way of life  
To see the good in Others, to do good for children  
And Jeff and Marlys Sears make the Optimist club of Denton  
a reality  
And Dan Rezac agreed to be the founding President and was  
inspired to help People City’s missions by hosting  
a throwbox in Denton  
Newspapers often say what is wrong with the world  
But this April choose to be optimistic to love God, your fellow  
man and your country  
Most of all to love yourself and your family  
Kind words, kind actions  
Be like Mother Theresa said a pencil in God’s hands.

Share this publication with friends.

It’s online at;

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

## Easter

by Sheila Tinkham, Lincoln

Easter is the end of the story  
More than chocolate bunnies and Easter egg hunts  
Christ crucified and arisen  
But there is another story  
Of faith in God and an eternal yes  
An engaged girl maybe 14 says yes to God  
To bearing Christ  
To Risking her death by stoning for adultery  
She said yes  
A sweet simple word  
And like the Kansas waitress seven months pregnant  
Who doles out pies and Chilli and cheese sandwiches at  
Town and Country restaurant decorated by Elvis photos  
The king lives  
And brings a warmth and gentleness  
To tired weary travelers who stop awhile  
Mary doles out faith and sweetness and kindness  
Just by saying yes to God, to faith, to life itself  
And Maybe just maybe this Easter  
We can pray to be more like Mary and say yes  
To life itself...  
Kind words, kind actions  
Be like Mother Theresa said a pencil in God’s hands.

<<<<< The Real House: *Continued from page 14*

I felt as if I had done something unspeakably dreadful, like going to a party without my unmentionables on. I felt awful. I was a traitor. I had sat in school with a colored person. It was a breach of the way of life in which I had grown up. St. Joe had put a lot of effort into bringing me up properly, and I had betrayed its trust.

The other students didn’t speak to me. I was below their contempt. I had broken the code. I copied my notes and passed them around, knowing they couldn’t have taken notes, standing by the wall. They took the notes, but no one said “thanks,” and no one looked at me. I didn’t exist any more to them. And I didn’t exist to myself, either. I was friendless among my friends.

The school year ended. Life went on. I married and moved to Texas. Had children. Became a teacher. Moved to California. Found California to be another Kansas Free State, but this time I lived there.

Living there made a big difference. I could sit with Black teachers at school, just as I could on the bus. I could sit with them in a cafeteria, just as I could on a garden wall if we waited for someone else. It was the done thing. I could do it because everyone else did it, without having to think about it or apologize to themselves for it. It did not make me invisible to any of my former friends. I wasn’t being a traitor to my upbringing. No soul-wrenching was involved—

I don’t know what the Black-White situation in Missouri is now. I hope the friendliness that existed in my childhood still exists.  
And I hope that the Civil War is finally over...

# P o e t r y

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## ON THE TRACE

Follow the path  
by the river that  
runs by the bluffs.  
Find the wild things.  
In the sun-shot  
shadows, feathers  
flash flying into  
the trees, and  
silent eyes watch  
the aliens who  
don't live here,  
but walk through  
the quiet solitude  
that graces each  
and every step.  
Flowers are  
springing up to  
kiss the sunshine,  
as butterflies hang  
in the air like  
floating petals.

## FOOLS RUSH IN

April has been  
sneaking around  
the corner of winter  
and dancing in her  
green grass dress.  
She knows how easy  
it is to fool humans,  
because they want  
to believe in dreams  
about showers and flowers.  
She is a fickle female  
with a mean streak,  
and she delights in her  
ability to throw a snow  
party when the fruit  
trees bloom too early.  
If you listen closely  
you may hear her voice  
laughing in the wind.

by Devon Adams, Peru

## REMEMBER THE RIVER

The Missouri River is  
longer than any  
memory on earth.  
It waits with  
infinite patience  
on lazy summer  
days when time  
is hot and drowsy  
with sweat and  
sleep. On zero  
days, ice locks it's  
mighty muscles  
into frozen cramps.  
Then, without warning  
storms will explode  
into walls of rushing  
water that flood the  
valley once again.  
You can fight it, but  
you won't win.

## BORDER LINES

Out in the wide West,  
where distance is so  
far away that it seems  
like an illusion, a single  
thunderstorm looks  
like an isolated island.  
Mountain ranges scrape  
the sky with their granite  
teeth and rivers rage  
through narrow canyons  
so deep they look like  
scars from an ancient war.  
From the top of a stone  
overlook, it is simply land  
laid out under an endless  
expanse of blue silk sky.  
To imagine a grid of state  
lines dividing this natural  
beauty into bits and pieces  
of parcels and acres, is like  
cutting up a pan of brownies.

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## BETWEEN THE LINES

There are two  
ways to listen  
to words that  
are spoken.  
Silent sentiments  
are hidden under  
the surface of the  
sentences we speak.  
It is another language  
that not everyone  
can read, and it is a  
secret code that can  
hide things that we  
don't want others  
to know. Mind radar  
is like a "fly on the  
wall" who knows all  
about true feelings.

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