



Everybody Loves a Parade! This one in Brownville, Nebraska, July 4th.

Tourists! Visitors! Welcome!

Enjoy exploring communities in the Valleys of the Nemaha Rivers. Take this free publication home with you to use as a reference for your next visit to the area.

Readers!

Returning this month are several of your favorite Nebraska columnists. This 16-page issue can be your “two cups of coffee” companion.

Viewers!

In this issue you will find my recent photographs of July 4th, parades, “back-to-school” and more, from around Southeast Nebraska.

Shoppers!

Keep up with local businesses and what’s special this month. And please thank them for advertising in “*Your Country Neighbor*”.

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George W. Neubert is Director of the Flatwater Art Foundation



The Flatwater Art Foundation was founded in 2004 to initiate and present cultural and visual arts programming, contemporary artist residencies including the establishment of an **American Folk Art Museum** in the historic frontier river-town of Brownville, Nebraska.



Learn more about the **American Folk Art Museum** on page 5

Your Country Neighbor

Voices and Views From the Valleys of the Nemaha

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

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The Pursuit of Happiness

Dorothy Rieke

Most of us regard life as a busy hectic adventure. We keep busy chasing our dreams, fulfilling responsibilities, and solving past and present problems. Sometimes, we are just too busy! However, living our lives in the “busy lane” may result in losing our chances for happiness. Are we so occupied that we fail to recognize our blessings?

Dorothy in the WIZARD OF OZ, once observed, “If I ever go looking for my heart’s desire, I won’t look any further than my own backyard.” With that statement, she realizes that happiness is always with her. It is just a matter of recognizing it, relishing it, and making a few changes.

Try these G’s to bring you closer to a state of happiness;
Gratitude - Feel grateful for all your blessings.

Give to others - Recognize the needs of others and fulfill them.

Gladden - Be kind to all, and let your example lift others.

Goodness - Search for opportunities to exhibit your charitable nature.

It is also a good idea to stop each day to discover things in your life that can be appreciated. At the end of each day, think of at least three positive things that happened that day, especially those little wins and thoughtful gestures from others. When we take time to recognize these wins, our attitudes improve.

Yes, happiness can be found in our own backyards as Dorothy suggested. It is often a matter of seeing the good in our lives, recognizing it, and feeling appreciative. Make happiness your primary intention in life.

Beginning YCN’s Nineteenth Year!

Stephen Hassler, Peru

Eighteen years ago this month, the first issue of “*Your Country Neighbor*” was published in Nemaha County, Nebraska. Only eight pages of articles and some one-megapixel photographs, with every page in black and white (and gray). Since that August in 2001, YCN has doubled in size and content, including 12 of 16 pages in full color.

Many columnists have come and gone; Joe Smith, Karen Ott, and Frieda Burston are a cherished few who come to mind. Readers depend on current writers for an ongoing monthly presence year after year, such as Devon Adams and Merri Johnson. Many readers hope for the comeback of such writers as Steve Adams and Merlin Wright.

For me, “*Your Country Neighbor*” is my photo gallery, which attempts to give balance to the poetry and prose of those who are more persistent with literary endeavors than I. In recent years I have been adding action photos of Peru State athletes from “home” games; football, volleyball, men’s and women’s basketball, baseball and softball.

So what changes will the next 18 years bring? Well, I’m not keeping any secrets; I just don’t know yet. So stay tuned, warm up that cup of coffee or tea, and enjoy this issue.

**Your Country Neighbor is online!!!
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August Writers

Devon Adams
Stephen Hassler
Merri Johnson
Dorothy Rieke
Janet Sobczyk
Thank You!

21 new Parkinson's-specific exercise classes to begin as result of "Delay the Disease" training.

Omaha, NE - Parkinson's Nebraska welcomed 56 professionals from across Nebraska to the "Midwest Delay the Disease" training in Grand Island, Neb., on July 18-19. The training provided attendees with the knowledge and tools to design and implement a community-based, Parkinson's-specific exercise class. Because of the Parkinson's Nebraska commitment to making training accessible, all attendees were provided with the cost of registration, lodging, a mileage stipend, and meals throughout the training.

Exercise provides evidence-based benefits for the management of symptoms and can delay the progression of Parkinson's disease. Parkinson's Nebraska has identified a lack of Parkinson's exercise classes in rural communities and is committed to making the benefits of exercise available across the state. As a result of the Delay the Disease training, 21 new Parkinson's exercise classes will begin in Nebraska by Oct. 1. More than 15 of these classes will serve in rural and underserved communities.

John Bertoni, M.D., Ph.D., professor in the University of Nebraska Medical Center Department of Neurological Sciences, and director of the Parkinson's disease program at Nebraska Medicine, UNMC's clinical partners, was the guest speaker at the training. He presented on the role of Exercise in Parkinson's Disease Management and conducted a lively Question and Answer session.

On the final day of the training, over 20 people with Parkinson's and their caregivers traveled from Omaha, Lincoln, and Grand Island to participate in the training's Demo Class and enjoyed a lunch with the attendees. The "Delay the Disease" training provided the opportunity to celebrate and strengthen the Parkinson's community and network with others across the state.

The immense impact this training has made on the Nebraska community is made possible through a partnership with the Parkinson's Foundation. The foundation awarded Parkinson's Nebraska a community grant to help support training costs. Because of the grant, Parkinson's Nebraska was able to provide the training to more professionals and further increase the number of exercise classes throughout Nebraska. The full list of training attendees and locations that will provide "Delay the Disease" services can be found at; <https://parkinsonsnebraska.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/DTD-Grant-Awardees.pdf>

About Parkinson's Nebraska

Parkinson's Nebraska is on a mission to be the primary source for Parkinson's disease education, support, and services in Nebraska. Through awareness and collaboration, we can provide the right information and resources Nebraskans need on their journey with Parkinson's disease.

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To learn more about how Parkinson's Nebraska is serving the PD community, visit www.parkinsonsnebraska.org.



Johnson County Court House in Tecumseh, July 3rd.



These bees are creating some buzz around Nemaha County, Nebraska.



Elizabeth Johnson of Tecumseh finishing the 10K in 4th place overall in the annual Brownville Freedom Run.



Painted Lady on Coneflower

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July 4th, Brownville



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LOOK IN THE GRASS

The temperatures say it's still summer, but if you look around, signs are waiting to be found that changes may be sooner than we'd like. There are the fuzzy little coats worn by caterpillars crawling like they have someplace to go. A dry rattle comes from busy leaves waiting for their colors to go from green to gold and red and purple. Today the turkey vultures did a practice spiral early, so that when their gatherings commence they will be ready to join the army of black wings on their journey south, sailing on the thermals from the river valleys. A heat wave has sent a signal that the time for growing is almost over. Fledglings are learning lessons really fast from their parents, as the last of their brand new feathers grow out. I'll be glad to see the crests appear on young cardinals; they look very strange with part of their heads still bald. Barn swallows are busy doing roll-overs and bombing runs like fighter jets, but when they look at the calendar of the sun, they'll start counting until August is all gone. I miss them already! I miss yesterday, but I can't wait for tomorrow.

SEEING SPOTS

I ran to get my glasses, because my eyes were blurry. It seemed to me to be that there were three bright fawns, dappled in the slanting sun, dancing through the lilies by the lake beside the lane. Maybe I saw only one, or none, or more. But when I looked again, there was a lovely doe, sleek as silk, with babies spotted all the same, with painted drops of snow scattered on their backs. She must have been the sitter of the hour, and, like humans, taking her turn so that other mothers could be wild and free for fleeting minutes of their motherhood, before strong bonds drew them back like magnets stronger than the toughest steel.

THE VALLEY OF ECHOS

It isn't a Sunday, with peaceful church bells sending soft notes across the fields. It isn't time for young students to be torn away from their summer fantasy, as they trudge toward school wearing new clothes and pink sunburns. It is, however, time to hear grunts, groans, and rebel yells bouncing from hill to hill. Football practice has started once again, and the large, lumbering shapes of warriors wrapped in padding, like parcels waiting for stamps, are plodding through the heat and humidity, vying for a place on the team. They always tend to forget about this part, and to remember only the glory and the gore and the touchdowns, and the cheerleaders. But time will move on, as it always does, and summer will become autumn, before it changes into an early winter, when the boys' fingers and toes will be only frost-bitten memories of mobility and comfort.

ABUNDANCE, OR NOT

There is, was and will be water everywhere, but it isn't in the right places. When someone turned on the faucet last March at exactly the same time that they turned up the heat, a colossal catastrophe was the result. The temperature loosened the frozen river ice so that it cracked and exploded into huge chunks the size of cars. At the same time, rain came down in apocalyptic amounts and pushed the ice boulders over the river banks like giant wrecking balls that leveled everything they touched. Frozen ground had no chance to act as a sponge, so the water went wide and fast in its deadly rampage. Roads and buildings and livestock, not to mention levees, were destroyed, and people stared at the devastation in shock. And they are still staring at it. The ruined areas are like targets in a shooting gallery because they have no defense against the water that is waiting to kill them again. The levees that were once an economic boon have become a nightmare of instability and weakness waiting to collapse.

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OLD HOUSES, OLD LADIES

I grew up in a small town, on a block lined with trees. In the summer, the sidewalks threaded through green tunnels that were cool, quiet and set apart from the real world. A perfect place for a child to wander and wonder about important things like butterflies and flowers, and all the elusive birds who sang in feather words. Each house had an elderly lady in residence. All the husbands were long gone, and I was the only child in the neighborhood. Spoiled doesn't begin to cover the situation for me, and my mother was by nature a caregiver who welcomed the ladies to come for coffee and cookies any time they were lonesome or hungry. Our house was busy every day with these fragile, wispy women who loved to talk about their long lives. It was my privilege to listen, and to enjoy the fabulous produce from backyard gardens that they shared with us. Their houses were magic places full of old furniture, old photos and the scents of sachet, fresh homemade bread and jam, and the dust of yesterday. Their yards had billows of flowers, and clotheslines full of washing drying in the wind and the sunshine. Now the ladies are gone, but the houses are still there, full of new lives making their own memories.

COUNTRY LIGHT

In the dew of the morning, birds greet the day with a chorus of lilting prayers that echo through the trees and into open windows. They are out in the country, away from acres of cement and hard buildings, and the metallic traffic and frantic activity of cities. Sun rays shoot through wispy curtains of fog, illuminating the crowns of lush summer trees where nestlings squawk with open mouths about empty bellies, so they use the dawn to start searching for lunch. A painted landscape emerges from behind the shades of night, under an early, pale pink silk sky. Then the magic of clouds enters the picture, throwing sliding shadows sailing with the wind over the patchwork quilt of fields and forests. Through the long summer day, the light is changing every second, bouncing down from the luminescent dome that fits over the earth. Sometimes storms darken the view with rain and streaks of electric lightning. In time, though, a depth of blue returns, before it is replaced by the infinite pool of stars that bring their own long light to our planet.



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Merri Johnson



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County fair time has come and gone already. It used to be that the county fair wasn't until late July or early August, but for some reason it has been moved up to pre-mid-July. Seems like the availability of mid-way entertainment was part of the reason. And maybe the fact that school starts so cotton-pickin' early that holding the fair in August would bump right up against that.

I don't suppose the timing of the fair matters a whole lot to most aspects of it, except for the garden produce competition. The "competition" has become little more than a display of samplings from a handful of gardeners. I've entered a few times myself over the years, but with such an early date, the only thing I could have entered this year would have been carrots. Hubby did have sweet corn ready, but he had such poor germination in his little patch this year that providing the requisite number of ears would have taken at least 5% of the crop: a price to dear to pay for someone who loves corn on the cob like Hubby does.

Of course, I could have entered in the baked goods category. I actually won a blue ribbon for my angel food cake once in Cherokee County, Iowa, about 40 years ago. I'm pretty sure I wasn't the only entrant.

Or, I could enter a pie. Pie crust is one of the few things I can legitimately claim to excel at making. Or, at least I could claim that until a couple of weeks ago when my pie crust pride "wenteth" before a fall. The lousy crust wasn't really my fault.....entirely.

I had made a trip up to Cherokee County to visit my mom and was staying at my sister's house. Her husband loves cherry pie. So, as a thank-you for their hospitality, I brought along some fresh cherries from our son's tree to make my brother-in-law a home-made pie. I figured my sister would have flour and shortening for the crust, so I didn't take that with me.

Well, she had flour, but the only solid shortening in the cabinet was a half-empty, little bitty can. You know, the size you buy if you live in a pop-up camper or never actually bake. Well, I scraped every bit of it out and blended it with flour, cold water and a little salt. Came time to roll it out and we discovered there was no waxed paper. We tried using plastic shelf liner. No luck. So we went to flouring the counter top. Not much better. The dough wouldn't roll out decently to start with and then it stuck to the surface.

On top of that, I began to question whether there was enough dough to make a double-crust for my sister's deep dish pie plate. Not to worry, she said. She had a package of pre-made crusts in the fridge. We got one out and attempted to unroll it. Cardboard came to mind. No wonder: the expiration date was 2017.

That got me wondering about the shortening in my home-made crust. Perhaps old shortening was the reason it wasn't cooperating. I've never had shortening go bad on me, but then again, I've never used 12-year-old shortening. That's

Continued on next page...>>>>>

It's Back To School!



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<<< *Continued from page 10.*

right: the expiration date on the bottom of the can was 2007.

I suppose we should have called it quits about then and just used the cherry filling as an ice cream topper. But I persevered, pressing the outdated pre-made crust into the bottom of the pan, and using the home-made crust (made with borderline-rancid shortening) for the top crust. We topped the pie with lots of Bunny Tracks ice cream and barely noticed the pastry. The good news is that no one got indigestion in the middle of the night.

I'm going back to Cherokee County in a few days. I have cherries in my freezer, a full can of fresh shortening in my cabinet, and a compelling need to redeem my pie crust reputation. Keep your fingers crossed for me!

The BSB
Janet Sobczyk, 2019

It happens every year at this time.

One week I'm enjoying the laid-back, less-busy days of July, and the next I walk into a Back to School sign at the grocery store. Literally! I'm clumsy.

That first jolt doesn't sit well. I know some parents are more than ready for school to begin. But my insides churn at the thought of all the summer things I haven't done yet. Sure, I've stayed up later and slept in sometimes. I've enjoyed walks, tended flowers, and slurped ice cream cones. But what about my list?

I start every summer with a long list of want-to-do's. The list includes recreation ideas and projects around the house. A quick look now shows very little accomplished. Time to go into summer overdrive.

First, I schedule a gathering with relatives, and a trip to visit my sister. Next, schedule the school physical and eye exam. Then prioritize the projects. Painting, cleaning, organizing. I'll clear out the garage on the next cool day. Sort old photos on a beastly hot day. Okay, the huge pile of pictures might not get done. Winter's a good time for that, or next summer. I'm good at procrastinating.

Time to make another list. A long shopping list of back to school supplies and clothes for a growing daughter. I dread starting this because it can be an expensive outing, and it signifies to me the end of summer. Yes, there will still be plenty of hot weather through September, but when school starts in mid-August, it's all over.

I dread making that list, but I actually enjoy getting it done. At home I label and help pack each item into the backpack, double-checking the list. There's something about new school supplies that makes me feel like anything is possible. It's a fresh start that's better than New Year's Day.

The backpack then sits and waits patiently to be called into action. It's last year's model, but should make it through another year. When new, it sat up straight and ready to go. Now it slouches, and a pocket is torn, but it'll hang nicely on my daughter's back for the annual, first-day-of-school photo on the front porch. Smile!

By now I'm smiling at the thought of it all. The routines. The activities and events. Seeing kids and parents I haven't seen all summer. It will be a good year.

Yep! I've caught it. The Back to School Bug!

Window On Fifth Street

Stephen Hassler

Next month my window on Fifth Street will remain open on cool September nights. Mornings I'll hear the sound of the school bus leaving its 'stop' before I want to get up. During the day the College students will walk back and forth from home to campus and back home again. But Summer won't be over yet. Yes, leaves will begin falling, school busses will be running, but it's not over 'til it's over, and that's not until September 23rd, the first day of Autumn.

This has been a good Summer so far, and I don't have to be ready for it to end. A few cool nights don't mean that forced air cooling won't be welcomed now and then on some September days. I remember when classrooms could be pretty warm in September.

I can still see Sagittarius in the southern sky at night, but it won't be long before the Pleiades will be rising in the early evening. So what to do to make Summer last? Well, you don't have to wait until the leaves change color to take a scenic drive in the country. The late Summer wildflowers are busting out all over. Highway 75 between Auburn and Nebraska City is frequented with many wildflowers of yellow and a few rare hues such as blue or magenta if one looks carefully. And Highway 67 from Peru going south is my favorite drive for wildflower photography.

Speaking of Summer color, the butterflies seem more numerous this year. The rain has been good to their food sources and the humidity helps release them from their chrysalises. Butterflies are a favorite photo subject of mine.

August is a rewarding month for us country camera buffs, and I expect continuing rewards in September. Monarchs will migrate through this area soon, but I have yet to experience the wonder of nature that is a tree with its branches loaded with resting Monarchs in the late afternoon sun. Maybe this year.

It's hard to fight those seasonal things that September brings. Labor Day, football, and back-to-school all 'feel' like Fall, even with green trees and eighty degrees! So I'll just go with the flow. I'll enjoy the cool nights, the late Summer colors, and the anticipation of more colors this Fall. Plus for now and for several weeks more, my window on Fifth Street shows me everyday, Summertime!



More of these along H-75, but this one from H-67 was a better image.



No photos of Monarchs yet this year. This is a "Red-spotted Purple".



Plays at this Summer Theatre run through August 11.



Peru State College Summertime Events & Freshman Orientation



Peru State College hosted high school training camps throughout the Summer. Above, the PSC football coaches introduce the evening program.



Falls City vs North Platt



Wilber-Clatonia vs Falls City



The PSC Cheer Squad in Brownville's Freedom Parade on July 4th.



Morrill vs Conestoga



Orientation days were opportune times to shop for Fall apparel in the Student Center "Cat Cave".



Peru State College Freshman Orientation & New Food Service



Estric Joseph, the new director of dining services at PSC is pictured here on “opening day” of the new PSC dining hall, “Fresh Ideas”. Estric states that emphasis is on food quality, food freshness, and healthier eating, presented by way of “Action Stations”, including the chef’s table, grill, salad and deli bars, and desserts, to name a few. It’s “all you can eat” with extended hours of 7 A.M. to 11 P.M.



Freshmen attending orientation had lunch in the new, expanded dining hall.



PSC sidewalks were busy on orientation days throughout the Summer.



“Customer Action Stations” is a theme in the new cafeteria.



The final agenda item on the freshman orientation was campus tours.



The cafeteria opened in July in time for freshman orientation on the 19th.

NEWS FROM PERU STATE COLLEGE

Peru State Phi Beta Lambda Chapter brings home 15 national trophies

San Antonio, Texas – The Peru State Phi Beta Lambda chapter brought home 15 national awards including 13 top ten trophies. Of the 17 students representing Peru State, 16 placed in the top ten.

More than 1,300 of America’s best and brightest college students traveled to Texas to “Create. Lead. Inspire” as they competed for the opportunity to win more than \$110,000 in cash awards. This year’s National Leadership Conference took place in San Antonio from June 24–27.

These highly competitive students from all over the United States took part in 60 different business and business-related events. In order to make it to the national conference, participants must first receive a first, second, or third in their event at the state level.

First Place – Tristen Nelson (Lincoln) – Human Resource Management
Second Place – Brenda Lutz (Rock Port, Mo.) – Future Business Educator
Second Place – Sara Granfors (Fremont) and Emily Oestmann (Johnson) – Emerging Business Issues
Third Place – Dolores McGargill (Auburn) – Human Resources Management
Third Place – Trey Nelson (Lincoln) – Future Business Executive
Fourth Place – Rachael Cole (Wymore) – Local Chapter Annual Business Report
Fifth Place – Rachael Cole (Wymore), Lindsay Harlow (Dawson), and Brooke Hays (Oxford) – Forensic Accounting
Sixth Place – Rozlyn Cole (Wymore), Tyler Harms (Falls City), Brooke Hays (Oxford), Trey Nelson (Lincoln), and Tristen Nelson (Lincoln) – Parliamentary Procedure
Seventh Place – Hannah Cook (Ponca) – Retail Management
Eighth Place – Tyler Harms (Falls City) and Noah Wynn (Auburn) – Financial Analysis Decision Making
Ninth Place – Rachael Cole (Wymore) – Computer Applications
Tenth Place – Ashli Becker (Yankton, S.D.), Velma Hauck (Fremont), and Nancy Ramirez (Tecumseh) – Marketing Analysis and Decision Making.
Top 15 Finish – Brenda Lutz (Rock Port, Mo.) – Global Analysis and Decision Making
Top 15 Finish – Dolores McGargill (Auburn) – Hospitality Management
Top 15 Finish – Velma Hauck (Fremont) and Nancy Rameriz (Tecumseh) – Management Analysis and Decision Making

In addition to all of their individual successes, Peru State PBL earned the Hollis and Kitty Guy Gold Seal Chapter Award of Merit, which recognizes outstanding chapters that have actively participated in projects and programs identified with the goals of FBLA-PBL.

PBL’s advisor at Peru State, Dr. Sheri Grotrian, has presented for many years at the national conference. Her topic this year was “Leading Community Service Efforts in Phi Beta Lambda.”

Another Successful NLC for Nebraska PBL

More than 1,300 of America’s best and brightest college students traveled to Texas to “Create. Lead. Inspire” as they competed for the opportunity to win more than \$110,000 in cash awards.

The Phi Beta Lambda (PBL) National Leadership Conference (NLC) was held June 24–27 in San Antonio. Participants from across the United States attended this exciting conference to enhance their business skills, expand their networks, and participate in 60 business and business-related competitive events.

Nearly 70 Nebraska PBL members and advisers were among the 1,300 at the San Antonio NLC.

Nebraska PBL members captured four first places at their recent National Leadership Conference and the state chapter brought home 46 Top Ten finishes. As a state, Nebraska unofficially finished fourth among all of the states competing with its 46 awards. There were approximately 35 states competing. Also, a number of the members earned a cash prize along with their respective placing which totaled approximately \$8,400.

In addition, D.J. Hardwick (Benkelman) of the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) PBL chapter was elected to serve as the Mountain Plains Vice President for the 2019-20 year. Hardwick succeeds the University of Nebraska – Lincoln PBL member Joel Beckwith (Valencia, Calif.) who served in that capacity for the 18-19 year. This was the third year in a row that a member of Nebraska PBL has served in this capacity.

Also, Kylie Douppnik (Harvard), a virtual member who affiliated with the Nebraska PBL State chapter, was selected as the national parliamentarian so Nebraska PBL will be well represented on the national officer team. Douppnik succeeds fellow Nebraskan Abi Sheen (Kearney) of the UNK chapter who served as parliamentarian for the 2018-19 year.

The awards earned are a part of a comprehensive national competitive events program sponsored by FBLA-PBL that recognizes and rewards excellence in a broad range of business and career-related areas. For many students, the competitive events are the capstone activity of their academic careers. In addition to the competitions, students immersed themselves in educational workshops, visited an information-packed exhibit hall, and attended motivational keynotes on a broad range of business topics

The Nebraska PBL State Chapter was awarded several certificates. The state chapter placed first in the Mountain Plains region for having the most professional division members.

The Peru State College and Midland University chapters were recognized as Hollis and Kitty Guy Gold Seal Chapters of Merit which recognizes outstanding chapters that have actively participated in projects and programs identified with the goals of FBLA-PBL.

The Midland University Chapter was recognized for having the highest professional division membership in the Mountain Plains region while Peru State and the University of Nebraska – Lincoln tied for second.

Nebraska PBL was well represented as well in terms of workshops as there were two different presentations made by different individuals throughout the conference. Dr. Sheri Grotrian from Peru State has presented for many years. Her topic this year was “Leading Community Service Efforts in Phi Beta Lambda.” Rita Bristol of Midland University presented “Building Relationships Builds Careers.” Bristol, who has been a presenter at the NLC for several years, was among those recognized as becoming a member of FBLA-PBL’s Wall of Fame.

All of the other Nebraska advisers assisted in some capacity at the conference either as competition administrators or coordinators.

In addition, State Adviser Ted L. Harshbarger (Humboldt) from Peru State assisted with the competitive events throughout the conference as part of the national awards program committee. He is serving his fourth term on the committee officially starting in September. Harshbarger has served as the state adviser for Nebraska PBL for 24 years.



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