

Your *Country* Neighbor

Free

December 2017

Auburn • Brownville • Cook • Falls City • Hiawatha • Johnson • Nebraska City • Peru • Rock Port • Sabetha • Syracuse • Tecumseh

A Magazine for Small Towns
and Rural America



Winter birds are easily spotted on bare branches.



Sunrise over the Missouri River, November 2017

Photo by Steve Adams of Peru

Merry Christmas

Your Country Neighbor

*Voices and Views From the
Valleys of the Nemaha*

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler



Harvesting was a common sight in November.

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Guitar Poems

Steve Adams



It's old
It's new
It's good for you
It's family time

Christmas lights are shining bright
And church bells chime

Kids want their presents
And Santa's
running out of time

Football games
Candy canes
And homemade wine

Enjoy it
It's family time

December Writers

Devon Adams
Steve Adams
Merri Johnson
Lee Nyberg
Merlin Wright

Thank You!

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Caffeine Musings

Merlin Wright

CABIN FEVER ARGGGGGGGGGG. The cat and Darlene have it and I feel that I might get it from them. It is 30 degrees outdoors at 10 am. I have just returned from feeding birds the sunflower hearts. Carried in some firewood and am thinking of baking bread or cookies or potatoes. Perhaps all three. Activity is good for me to prevent cabin fever so I guess I will quit making sentences and go to the kitchen.

Hello again. Got a container of potatoes out of the fruit room to wash before baking them. I sure like the flavor of baked spuds with the skin still on them. I will get the portable oven out of the storage room and put it on top of the wood stove. The oven cost \$5.00 at a salvage place in Lincoln. The oven is about one cubic foot and has two racks plus a temperature gauge. Back to writing later.

There, I feel better as a few hours have passed, and the batch of bread dough is in a big ceramic bowl on the floor behind the wood stove. In addition to a simple flour, water and yeast recipe, this one calls for sugar, salt, eggs and butter. It sure makes good tasting rolls. The potatoes are baking in the portable oven on the wood stove in the basement. The basement is where the cat and I work on my diary and other writings. This new cat has a few bad manners but we are enjoying his antics. Right Darlene?

Darlene has decided to work on her 2018 gardening plan soon as her method of curing Cabin Fever. She also has a plan for the cat but it requires me to trap some birds and release them in the basement. I imagine bird crap on my keyboard will cancel the warranty.

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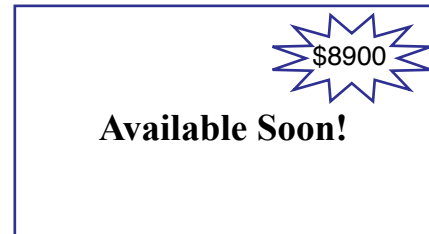
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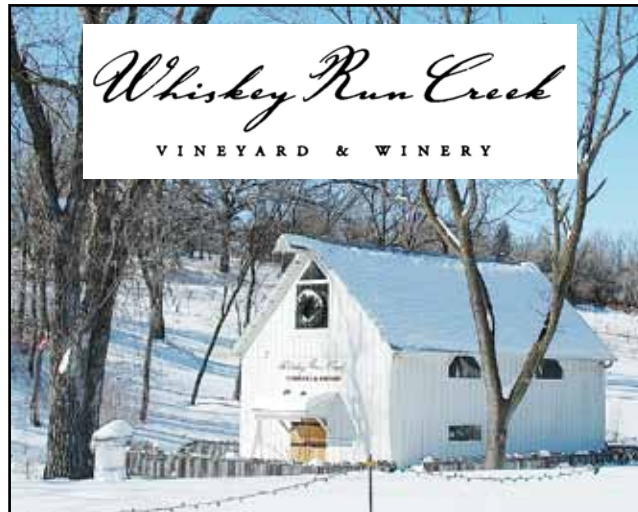
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Collegiate Basketball, Peru State College v William Penn University, December 2, 2017



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Poetry by Devon Adams

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INTENSITY

“I can’t hear the words for the music,” is a familiar experience. We are so immersed in a thought or action that our concentration blocks out everything around us, and we don’t hear noises and voices, or even see what is in front of our eyes. It can be dangerous if your temporary blindness or deafness makes you miss the clues or signals that will keep you safe. When you are driving a mass of metal that can smash a life in a fraction of a second, or using a sharp tool with a motor, caution comes before whatever your present state of mind decides is important.

CAMPING OUT

The river is cold and whispers of ice brush it’s shores. Frost has covered the damp ground and looks like cotton on leaves that are more ice than fire. Autumn was brief and bright and beautiful, a flash before the diamond hardness of winter. The buck who is standing like a statue is breathing fog out of his metal mouth, and the mouse scurrying into the hollow cave under the old oak tree wants to curl up in his warm bed until the sun comes up and the owl stops hunting.

GOLD LEAF

The first kiss of pink light is soft and insubstantial as it reaches through misty air that is less than fog, but not quite clear. As the sun opens it’s face, a thin layer of gold leaf applies itself to the barren oaks growing on the brow of the bluff. The trees are treasures more valuable than a fortune of money before they change back into their regular clothes.

AFTER ALL

A roller coaster ride made of emotional highs and lows is often how we remember the past. The sharpness of feelings leaves deep marks on the heart and mind that remain with all the intensity of the instant they happened. But it is the small minutes of every day that keep us on a steady course. We must do daily tasks despite hard sorrows and bright joys. Life really has to go on, because kids and livestock still get hungry, jobs require your presence, and the clock and the calendar won’t stop for anyone or anything. It is the familiar chores that anchor us from dawn to dusk, and the comforts of morning coffee, or toast with honey and tea, that warm our cold souls and give us the courage to walk into tomorrow.

BLOODY MOON

Over a silver glazed sheen of snow, with ice crystals floating through the frigid air, an erie sphere rises from behind a streak of low clouds. It is distorted by the lens of air into something less than round, and seems to be an alien form with a blood red substance oozing onto the hill where it sits. Then it starts to rise, carrying it’s fiery membrane into the sky. Soon, it has risen above the haze that wraps the earth and becomes a freshly minted coin, hard and totally without life.

THE PERSISTENCE OF HOPE

We are always children when Christmas comes. No matter how many years have gone by, or what kinds of experiences there have been in other years and in other places, in our minds we make the journey back to the most emotional hours and minutes of our childhood experiences of the holiday season. It makes no difference what our present financial or living conditions are, be they safe or dire, our heart goes home, and we are in the midst of those days whose memories are indelible. If times were hard and scary, we remember the burning hope that somehow December 25, and the new year would be better. If we were in a fortunate situation, our thoughts go back to the secure feeling that things would stay the way they were, without a clue that change could come. Now that we are grown up, or have become some facsimile of an adult, we can be sure that sitting next to us on Christmas morning will be the ghost of our childhood self.

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Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

Dateline: Savannah, Georgia

We're into our second week in Savannah, thoroughly enjoying the mild weather and all the great strolling, shopping, exploring, sight-seeing and dining in this beautiful city in the company of our daughter and son-in-law.

The change of scene and the time away from routines and obligations is wonderful, but it isn't entirely carefree. I offer as a case in point the travel snag we hit on our way here.

Our first day and a half on the road was smooth sailing, no surprises. But once we crossed from Tennessee into Georgia, our luck began to turn.

Our schedule had us arriving at Kennesaw Mountain National Civil War Battlefield Park near Marietta by 3:00. We wanted to hike a couple of hours before dark. Lunch would need to be reasonably quick to be on time, but eating fast food is definitely not my thing. So, when we spotted the big Cracker Barrel sign from the interstate at Dalton, I suggested we go there. It's not fantastic, but it's a step up from fast food without having to spend too much more time. You'd think you could just drive toward the sign and find the restaurant, but it wasn't that straightforward. After wasting five minutes trying to find it, we adopted Plan B and went to Chic-Fil-A instead. Alas, the line at the order counter was twenty-deep. We wasted no time turning around.

On our way out the door, a helpful fellow told us how to get to Cracker Barrel so we went back to Plan A. It was after 1:00 by then, so we thought we had missed the rush, but it was Veterans' Day and apparently everyone was observing it by eating out. Nevertheless, we were seated fairly quickly. OK, that was a good sign. But not good enough. Several waitresses walked past our table multiple times without even offering us menus. What were we, invisible? Finally, Brad had to find the hostess to get service. Even after we placed our order, it seemed that other diners who ordered after we did were getting their food before us. It was like our table was in some sort of parallel universe that no one else could enter. By that time we were really grumbling about our mistreatment. As Brad was paying the bill, the cashier asked him if everything had been OK. That may have been just an automatic question from her perspective, but Brad did not give the automatic reply. No, everything had not been OK. The manager was called over, Brad voiced his displeasure, and our meals were on the house.

Things were looking up. We were going to lose some hiking time, but we were on our way again. Just a few more miles down I-75 to Kennesaw Mountain.

Then, out of nowhere, BANG!! What in the world was that??!! Almost immediately the low tire pressure sensor began dinging. Brad pulled over in the only place available: the narrow triangle of open space between the far right lane of I-75 and the merge lane of the on-ramp. The shoulders were under construction, so there was no break-down lane. Traffic was speeding past at 80 mph on the driver's side and also coming at us from the on-ramp on the passenger side. It didn't take long to decide this was no place to empty the trunk to get at the spare tire. We have roadside assistance insurance, so Brad called for a tow-truck. It was nearly two hours before the truck got to us. I had a book to read to pass the time, and after about an hour a Highway Patrol officer came along and kept Brad company until the tow truck arrived.

The roadside assistance dispatcher had connected us with the Firestone Tire Store back in Dalton so we already knew that they didn't have the right size tire in stock, but we had hope they might be able to repair the damaged one. No such luck. Additionally, they discovered that the rim had been damaged beyond repair. Well, we did have a spare tire – of the donut variety. It was 5:00 p.m. on a Saturday, and there was no car dealership or tire store anywhere nearby that would be open on Sunday. Besides, they'd have to order a rim even if they did have the right tire. The donut spare could easily get us to Marietta, where we had a reservation for that night. But then what?

Decision time. Do we twiddle our thumbs in a hotel in Marietta until Monday, or more likely Tuesday, to get a new tire and rim? Or do we try to make it nearly 300 miles to Savannah on the donut and take care of it there? After consulting with our son, we decided to try the slow route to Savannah. We mapped a route that kept us off the interstate so we could safely drive 55 mph. The trip took only about two hours longer than it would have on our original route, and it was a lot more relaxing. The donut did us proud.

The Ford dealer here in Savannah gave us great service and we're all set for a (hopefully) uneventful return trip. I'm still curious about what we ran over that was so small we didn't see it, but so sharp and hard that it wrecked both the tire and the rim. I guess that will remain a mystery.

We have two more long trips planned after the first of the year. Although we learned that the donut spare is pretty good, we're going to have a full-size tire and rim in the trunk the next time we set off across the country.

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Bald Eagle with either her mate (or an 'offspring'); near river bridge north of Auburn.

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Alzheimer's Affects Us All



Your Bucket List—Don't Let Early Stage Dementia Stop You

By Lee Nyberg

Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman played cancer patients who escaped their treatment ward and pursued their dreams in the 2007 movie, “The Bucket List.” Did you see it? I never before thought about having to escape my life to pursue my dreams.

Working with older adults has been a gift of perspective, among many treasures shared. Some have lived extra-ordinary lives in the true sense of the term—traveled the world, worked dangerous jobs, and ate things few Americans would consider food. Others have experienced “ordinary” lives, which were equally rich for the families they nurtured, communities they served and legacies of faith and love they will leave.

Common among the satisfied older adults was a strong sense of direction at various key times in their lives. I often write about purpose and its importance in the later years of life. No matter where you, your children, or your grandchildren (if they exist) are on your journeys, consider your purpose and plan to live your dreams. Don't let a diagnosis of mild cognitive impairment or a form of dementia stop you. People can do many of the same things they have always done with mild cognitive impairment or with some dementias. (For more information on mild cognitive impairment, see this Lincoln Journal Star article, <https://goo.gl/wZnEFA>.)

Create your own bucket list using these 4 steps.

Write it down. Dedicate a notebook to your bucket list, keep an updated document on your computer, in an app on your smart phone, or sign up on one of the many sites like bucketlist.org.

Use prompts. Fill in the blank for statement like these to begin: “I want to visit...; to learn...; to experience...; to finish...; to meet...; or to taste...”

Update your list every so often. It should not be static because you are not. Humans change all the time; your bucket list can, too.

Look at other people's lists for inspiration. Know your aims are personal growth and fulfillment. Some people never stop striving; they never reach the end of their “growth.”

Perhaps you will be inspired by these bucket list items.

- Write a book
- Backpack Europe
- Help a stranger for the good
- Spend time with family, no matter what it takes
- Skydive
- Own a restaurant
- See the Pyramids
- Love people who hate you
- Resign from a job you don't like
- Dance as you walk down the street
- Connect with teachers who shaped your life and tell them your story
- Fly in a hot-air balloon across the country
- Mentor someone
- Learn a martial art
- Volunteer at hospice
- Be a vegetarian for 21 days
- Conquer your biggest fear
- Bury the hatchet
- Tell your parents/siblings/children you love them

In a November 3, 2017 Wall Street Journal article, neurologist Dr. G. Devi, theorized dementia is a disease of the brain which is a spectrum disorder, meaning different people experience the cognitive decline of dementia in varying degrees of severity. One cannot know in advance what an experience of dementia will bring. Pursue your dreams. Keep living your precious life as best as possible. What do you want to do next?

Lee Nyberg serves older adults and their families through education on aging issues and her company, Home Care Assistance. HomeCareAssistanceOmaha.com



BOBCAT BASKETBALL 2017-2018 SEASON

Mens

10/31	Valley City State Univ.	Valley City, ND	7:00 p.m.
11/1	Mayville State Univ.	Mayville, ND	7:00 p.m.
11/10	Dordt College	Orange City, IA	4:00 p.m.
11/11	Northwestern College	Orange City, IA	6:00 p.m.
11/13	Nebraska Wesleyan Univ.	Lincoln, NE	8:00 p.m.
11/14	Augustana Univ.	Sioux Falls SD	8:00 p.m.
11/24	Missouri Baptist Univ.	Columbia, MO	5:30 p.m.
11/25	Columbia College	Columbia, MO	3:00 p.m.
11/29	Missouri Valley College	Marshall, MO	7:30 p.m.
12/2	William Penn Univ.	Peru, NE	4:00 p.m.
12/6	Grace Univ.	Omaha, NE	7:00 p.m.
12/9	Benedictine College	Atchison, KS	7:30 p.m.
12/15	Friends Univ.	Peru, NE	7:00 p.m.
12/29	Dakota Wesleyan Univ.	Mitchell, SD	8:30 p.m.
12/30	Dordt College	Mitchell, SD	6:00 p.m.
1/3	Mid-America Nazarene Univ.	Olathe, KS	7:30 p.m.
1/6	Grand View Univ.	Peru, NE	4:00 p.m.
1/10	Graceland Univ.	Lamoni, IA	7:30 p.m.
1/13	Mount Mercy Univ.	Peru, NE	2:00 p.m.
1/17	Culver-Stockton College	Canton, MO	7:30 p.m.
1/20	Evangel Univ.	Peru, NE	4:00 p.m.
1/24	Clarke Univ.	Dubuque, IA	7:30 p.m.
1/27	Grand View Univ.	Des Moines, IA	4:00 p.m.
1/31	Avila Univ.	Peru, NE	7:30 p.m.
2/3	Culver-Stockton Univ.	Peru, NE	4:00 p.m.
2/7	William Penn Univ.	Oskaloosa, IA	7:30 p.m.
2/10	Central Methodist Univ.	Fayette, MO	4:00 p.m.
2/11	University of South Dakota	Vermillion, SD	TBD
2/14	Baker Univ.	Peru, NE	4:00 p.m.
2/17	Graceland Univ.	Peru, NE	4:00 p.m.
2/21	Clarke Univ.	Peru, NE	7:30 p.m.
2/24	Mount Mercy Univ.	Cedar Rapids, IA	4:00 p.m.



Womens

10/31	Bethany College	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
11/3	College of St. Mary	Omaha, NE	6:00 p.m.
11/7	Mount Marty College	Yankton, SD	6:00 p.m.
11/10	York College	York, NE	8:00 p.m.
11/11	Bethany College	York, NE	1:00 p.m.
11/15	Northwestern Missouri State Univ.	Maryville, MO	7:00 p.m.
11/17	Bellevue Univ.	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
11/18	Lincoln Univ.	Jefferson City, MO	4:00 p.m.
11/24	Wayne State College	Wayne, NE	5:00 p.m.
11/29	Missouri Valley College	Marshall, MO	5:30 p.m.
12/2	William Penn Univ.	Peru, NE	2:00 p.m.
12/9	Benedictine College	Atchison, KS	2:00 p.m.
12/10	Missouri Western State Univ.	St. Joseph, MO	6:00 p.m.
1/3	Mid-America Nazarene Univ.	Olathe, KS	5:30 p.m.
1/6	Grand View Univ.	Peru, NE	2:00 p.m.
1/8	Haskell Univ.	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
1/10	Graceland Univ.	Lamoni, IA	5:30 p.m.
1/13	Mount Mercy Univ.	Peru, NE	12:00 p.m.
1/17	Culver-Stockton College	Canton, MO	5:30 p.m.
1/20	Evangel Univ.	Peru, NE	2:00 p.m.
1/24	Clarke Univ.	Dubuque, IA	5:30 p.m.
1/27	Grand View Univ.	Des Moines, IA	2:00 p.m.
1/29	University of Nebraska Omaha	Omaha, NE	7:00 p.m.
1/31	Avila Univ.	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
2/3	Culver-Stockton College	Peru, NE	2:00 p.m.
2/7	William Penn Univ.	Oskaloosa, IA	5:30 p.m.
2/10	Central Methodist Univ.	Fayette, MO	2:00 p.m.
2/14	Baker Univ.	Peru, NE	2:00 p.m.
2/17	Graceland Univ.	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
2/21	Clarke Univ.	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
2/24	Mount Mercy Univ.	Cedar Rapids, IA	2:00 p.m.

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