

# Your *Country* Neighbor

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December 2023

*Inside, Sweeten your Coffee Break with Voices and Views from the Nemaha River Valleys.*



Bald Eagle pair, Loess Bluffs Wildlife Refuge, November 19, 2023.  
Likely one of two pairs of Bald Eagles that are year round residents.



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More Wildlife Photos on page 19.

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## *Your Country Neighbor*

*Voices and Views from the Valleys of the Nemaha*

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

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**www.yourcountryneighbor.com**

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### **This Month’s Writers & Contributors**

Devon Adams 23

Angela Allgood, Peru City News 8,9,10,11

(The Late) Frieda Burston 3

Stephen Hassler 2, 21

Merri Johnson 4

Mark Kattleman 14

KHN Center for the Arts 14

DiAnna Loy 10

Bruce Madsen 18

Nebraska City’s Morton-James Public Library 15

Nebraska City Tourism & Commerce 16,17

Dorothy Rieke 21

Sheila Tinkham 22

Thank You & Merry Christmas!

*“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

## CONTENTS

Decorative December!.....	2
Frieda’s “ <i>Thanksgiving 1929</i> ” Part 2 .....	3
Merri’s “ <i>Diary of a Part-time Housewife</i> ” .....	4
Brownville.....	5
Color Photos.....	1,6,7,8,12,17,19,20,24
Peru City News.....	8-11
Arbor City News.....	14-18
“Grandpa’s Fence” by Bruce Madsen.....	18
Wildlife Photos.....	19
Dorothy’s “ <i>Christmas Is Special</i> ” .....	21
My “ <i>Window From The Past</i> ” .....	21
Sheila Tinkham’s Poems.....	22
Devon’s Poetry.....	23
 <b>Valentino’s Coupon for up to Six!</b> .....	24

## **Decorative December!**

Stephen Hassler, Peru

Oh no! Another year is almost over. But not without first experiencing the best season of all! Christmas! A favorite time of year. Christmas Day! The one day a year when almost everyone hopes for snow.

Greetings Southeast Nebraska area readers! “Your Country Neighbor” publication is in part, my photo gallery of recent wildlife, landscapes, sports action, and other scenes from around Southeast Nebraska. Plus, each issue includes columns and poetry by local writers and some news from “Small Town America.” Let’s be thankful for the volunteers who bring you entertainment, information, and some news you are unlikely to find anywhere else.

Some readers are finding this paper in Papillion, Nebraska, at Dianas’s Papillion Tea Shop. Welcome new readers!

And it’s about that time of year when we can choose to be joyous in the shopping season, or complain about crowds. Your choice. Choose wisely.

I hope you have a wonderful Christmas, a happy New Year, and always be careful if you travel.

Don’t forget to clip the **Valentino’s coupon** on the back page.

**Carry it with you!**

And enjoy perusing “Your Country Neighbor!”

## Thanksgiving 1929 Part 2 (Continued from November YCN)

(The Late), Frieda Burston

Christmas ran into trouble too. Our protestant neighbors didn't approve of all the virgin Mary and baby Jesus things that went on in the classroom either, while Christmas trees were a pagan thing anyhow. And those plays the children gave, with all the animals, that was animal worship as well as Marian worship, wasn't it?

So most of the neighbors who couldn't afford to celebrate anything very much anyhow, didn't do a whole lot of celebrating at the holiday season either. Only the old, who gave up their own little luxuries for months in order to spoil their grandchildren, bought the little red wagon and the dolls that leaned against the wall. Parents only walked their children to town after supper to look at the new toys in the store windows, and dream uselessly.

Everyone received handmade presents that Auntie had knitted on since last January, or wooden toys that Uncle John had worked on for months. Fathers got paperweights Mothers got string potholders that Teacher had cajoled out of stubby-fingered little students in the no-man's land between the two holidays in school.

So what I remember of the holiday season and my childhood isn't exactly what I would like to remember. But the saddest memory of my childhood holiday seasons is also one that gives me reason to be thankful today. There was a Thanksgiving morning like other Thanksgiving mornings, when my brothers and I awoke to rime-clouded windows. We dressed in a hurry, and opened the door to run outside and see who else was out there to play. But in front of the door was a fresh new bushel basket full of groceries, with a big red ribbon with a bow on top and a card, "Have a Happy Thanksgiving."

Mamas eyes filled with tears as she pulled it in hastily. I thought "This is what the stories say are tears of gladness," because I had never seen Mama cry before no matter how awful things were. And I knew things were awful because we were getting down to the beans-and-mush menu again every day.

But they were not tears of gladness. She crouched down by the groceries, put her apron over her face, and really let the tears loose. We were shocked. When she could talk again she said in a broken voice, "Now everybody knows how poor we are! Everyone in the world must have seen it on our porch. No one will respect us anymore – how can we hold up our heads Among the neighbors now?"

*Continued on page 21 >>>*



Waiting for Santa

# Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson, Auburn

*Dear Readers,*

*We are in Savannah, Georgia, again for our seventh Thanksgiving with our daughter and son-in-law. I haven't found the inspiration yet to compose an original column about this trip, so I hope you don't mind a repeat from 2018. I wish you all wonderful Christmas and New Year's celebrations.*

Dateline: Savannah, Georgia, 2018

How pleasant, on a mid-November morning, to be sitting beside an open window, with a view through the tops of live oaks and American holly trees, four stories down to the brick streets of Savannah's Historic District. So what if it's cloudy right now; the sun is working up its courage to break through any minute. Later, I'll be on our rooftop patio, admiring the multiple "church and state" spires visible from the other side of our penthouse apartment.

Don't let the word "penthouse" give you the impression we're in some glamorous, modern, New York City-style, high rise condo. I wouldn't take that setting over this one. Give me the gentility of a Southern city; the intimacy of the historic squares; the canopy of huge live oaks draped in Spanish moss; and a shabby-chic apartment sectioned out of a 150-year old brick house, sharing a courtyard with the equally charming apartment house next door.

We have taken day trips into Savannah from our daughter and son-in-law's home just north of the city for a number of years now. But this is our second annual extended stay in the Historic District. When you spend two weeks in a place, you begin to feel at home. On subsequent visits, you get to re-discover the familiar along with the new. With little to do in the way of real chores, you have plenty of time for wandering and just soaking up the ambiance. I love to sit in the Squares and visit the bookstores and library; Hubby is always on the lookout for coffee houses. There's plenty of anything your heart desires within walking distance, so it's all good.

Travel is all about discovery, after all. One typically thinks of discovery in the physical sense: the architecture, historic sites, restaurants, and natural features of a place. Without those things, travel would seem pointless, I suppose. But there is also discovery in the sense of how one relates to a complete change of scene and pace. Little things take on significance and can become magnified, for good or ill.

Take for example, the matter of daily routines. Hubby likes his morning paper and TV programs. He can read the World-Herald on-line here, so that's not a big deal. But, the TV is another matter altogether. At home, Hubby wears his TV ears when I don't want to have to hear the programs he likes. No TV ears here. I have to just block it out.

The combination parlor/dining room is nicely furnished...but no recliner. This could prove to be a breakthrough in my quest to acquire a classy sofa and jettison the bulky recliner in our own living room. Hubby is getting used to having just a sofa and foot stool here. I've consented to allowing him to nap or watch TV lying on the sofa at will during the day, so long as he makes room for me when I want to watch TV in the evening.

We have a full kitchen here and could prepare every meal. But, there are oodles of cafes and world-class restaurants here, so eating out once a day is pretty much a given. As I write this, directly across the street from our apartment, people are lined up around the corner to eat at Mrs. Wilkes' Kitchen. It's open from 11:00 to 2:00 and standing in line for at least an hour is a point of honor, apparently. The fried chicken must be sublime to garner customers with that kind of willingness to wait.

Doing laundry is a bit different as well. The apartment-size washer-dryer is adequate, but you have to wash twice as many loads to get it all done. Plus, the dryer seems to start and stop every five minutes. Not sure if that's normal, but I keep having to check it to be sure. With only an armoire for hanging clothes, we are hooking hangers all along the bedroom fireplace mantle to supplement. I can't imagine living in an apartment fulltime, let alone one of those "tiny houses."

I'm sure I'll be ready to return to the Midwest and our relatively spacious house at the end of this trip. But for two weeks, we're living – and mostly loving – the cozy life.

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## Christmas in Brownville

By A Brownville Resident

The night came to Brownville along with the snow  
The rain and the sleet made it all glow  
The trees were silver, the streets like glass  
Here was Christmas in Brownville at last!

Dinner was ready, the children close by  
Friends at the door and dog on the floor  
Grand-pa and Grand-ma waiting to share  
The food and good fun and holiday fare.

The cold night set in, the guests made their leave  
The children to bed, the grown-ups relieved  
The day's almost over, another begins  
Christmas in Brownville finds its own end.

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



Cold and snowy weather usually results in much more time spent indoors. (Unless, of course, it's a day when you and the kids head for the hills with sleds in your trunk and boots on your feet.)

During all the hours your family is cozying up at home, you'll be keeping busy with lots of online activities — including streaming, gaming, chatting, posting, studying, working, browsing, and shopping. Which means you'll need super-fast internet this winter almost as much you'll need a good furnace.

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Senior Day was a good experience for PSC Seniors, Nov 11, 2023.  
PSC Football finishes the season with a 5 and 6 record.



Number 10, David Wingett Jr., was the highest scorer with 24 points in the 91 to 46 win over Mount Mercy University, November 18, 2023.



Peru State College 36 - 0 over Culver-Stockton  
Nov 11, 2023.



Kaylan Larry, high scorer with 21 points.  
PSC won 85 to 65 against Avila University.



I believe this team is the best performing PSC Womens Basketball team since I began photographing WBB five years ago. Each player scores layups, 3-pointers, and rebounds. Go Bobcats!

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Number 5, Sayvon Traylor was the 2nd highest scorer with 16 points in the 91 to 46 win over Mount Mercy University, November 18, 2023.



Photo Courtesy of Stephanie Holmes

Nemaha County Leadership Class #7 and OPPD Workers create Dog Park in Peru.  
Story on page 10.



Photo Courtesy of Vanessa Sherman

Max Kathol  
Winner of the Trunk Or Treat  
Adult Pumpkin Roll.  
Story on page 9.



We hope to have more news next month about the new facelift and retail plan for the building next to Western National Bank.

### BELOW

The mounds of dirt are strategic to the compaction necessary to support the huge dome which will be erected as part of the project.



## PCIG is Sponsoring a Community Christmas!

**Sunday, December 3**

5:30 - 7:30 pm at Peru City Hall

### Tree Decorating

Santa arrives close to 6:00 pm

Goodie Bags provided by the  
**Peru Fire Department**

Cocoa and Cookies provided by  
**Western National Bank**

Caroling lead by  
**Northridge Church**



# PERU CITY NEWS

Communication • Information • Pride In Community



Pumpkin Roll

Photo Courtesy of Vanessa Sherman

## Trunk Or Treat!

Angela Allgood

As usual, Kelsee Sayer and Vanessa Sherman did a great job with Trunk or Treat in 2023! Kelsee added a “Spook Zone” inside the City Hall. Katy Novak said, “It was really neat - they sectioned off the left half of city hall (in front of the window to the kitchen) and hung black plastic sheets up from the ceiling to the floor, it was like a maze and it was lit entirely by black lights, and there were glow sticks. You entered the front door and exited the side door.” Thank you to Kelsee, Hope and their husbands for adding something new to the fun!

There were about 159 adults and 169 kids who attended. Food trucks this year were; Rogue Street Tacos and Game-time Philly.

My Junior Reporter, Vera Novak even reported that the “trunks were awesome.” The winning trunk was Jurassic Park. Vera also stated that “The Mario trunk was so cool. There was a football trunk and some had games to play.”

Another fun new feature that was added by KJ Whitehorse Bar and Grill was the Halloween Maze. The Peru State College baseball team set up the hay bales and the Peru State College Drama Department also helped with the scares. You could also take your picture at the “bat wall.” Crew and Connor Armknecht went through the maze with their friends and their dad. Mom, Tasa said, “They did like it! They went through 3 times! And yes, there were some screams.” I heard that Asher Reeves was dressed as a scare crow and sat really still on the corner of a hay bale, then, someone would walk by and boo! People were scared! Kim Allgood stated that all proceeds made from the maze will go towards the purchasing of playground equipment.

Another new feature was a Pumpkin Roll hosted by Vanessa Sherman. She stated that there were, “Eight (8) kids and eight (8) adults. Max Kathol won the adult roll and his son Maverick won for the kids.”

Trunk or Treat gets bigger and better each year. Cannot wait to see what 2024 brings!

## A Grateful Community

Angela Allgood

“A Grateful Community” was the theme of the last community meal sponsored by Peru Community Impact Group (PCIG) and donations in memory of Jolene Downing.

The food was fantastic! There was turkey and ham cooked by Phenon Risen Creatives and community members brought breads, pies, deviled eggs, honey butter corn, stuffing, cheesy potato casserole, mixed fruit fluff and deserts!

There were roughly forty (40) people that came to eat and the Peru softball team helped with set-up and clean-up! Miranda Decker stated, “Hopefully we can continue more meals this next year!”

This reporter hopes so also! The food was amazing and it was so nice to sit and talk with people not always seen on a daily basis. The community meals this year were fun and a very important part of community growth.

## Peru Bark Park

Angela Allgood

The Peru Bark Park is open and has had visitors already! OPPD showed up and helped get things done. They helped the NCL class put up the fence posts. I hear they are not quite done but the dogs that visited loved it! They ran around until they were tuckered out. Remember to bring poop bags and clean up after your dogs.

## Tuesday Literary Club Reads

DiAnna Loy, Tuesday Literary Club

Every year the Tuesday Literary Club picks a theme, and the theme for 2022-2023 was books that were made into movies. To end our year, we spent October and November reading and watching the movie of the book; *One for the Money* by Janet Evanovich. This was the first book in her Stephanie Plum novels; there have been 30 to date.

As we begin *One for the Money*, we meet up with Stephanie Plum on her way to her parents' house for dinner in Newark, New Jersey. She is reminiscing about one Joseph Morelli who lived two blocks over from her growing up, and the part he played in her childhood and teenage years. Until six months ago she was flush with a job and money but after being laid off is now about to have her Mazda Miata repossessed and has no idea what her next job will be. Her Grandma Plum will also be at dinner and between her grandma and parents they will be full of ideas on how she should fix her life. One of the ideas is her cousin Vinnie the bail bondsman, who just happens to need someone to do filing and such. The next morning her car has indeed been reposed and she is at the bottom of the barrel. She walked three blocks from her apartment to the Blue Ribbon Car Lot and bought a rusted-out Nova by trading her TV and VCR for it. She threw in her food processor and microwave, and they paid her taxes and license. Does this tell you what kind of a car it was?

Stephanie headed over to see Vinnie and even though he had filled the filing position, reluctantly (after Stephanie threatened to tell his mother some information from their childhood) handed over a skip tracing file that would get her 10% of the bond or \$10,000 if she would bring the dead-beat in. The dead-beat? None other than Joseph Morelli; the one and only. Joe grew up to be a cop, ended up shooting a guy, and didn't show up for his court date.

As you can imagine, Stephanie's quest for Morelli takes her all over Newark. Vinnie takes pity on her and puts her in touch with a seasoned skip tracer who can give her some advice. Among this advice is to get a gun and learn to shoot. He helps with that and assists her bringing in a less dangerous felon, so she gets a little pocket money. After Morelli literally rescues her from a would-be professional boxer, she tries to talk him into giving himself up. No dice! Morelli convinces her that he is innocent, and she and Morelli end up teaming up to catch a drug operation, but she still wants to bring him in for the reward. As you can imagine, he is not very cooperative.

The book was coarse in places as one might expect from rougher neighborhoods in New Jersey, although I have a brother-in-law who lives in Newark and he and his family are quite normal and pleasant to be around. There was a bit of language that some in our group objected to. There were a few of the ladies that didn't come to the viewing party because they were apprehensive as to what the language in the movie would be. In actuality, the language in the movie was not that bad. If there was any, it was in the context of the story and it went right over my head. The movie was fast paced and stayed fairly well to the story of the book with a few changes. I actually enjoyed the movie more than I did the book; it is usually the other way around for me.

Happy reading!

## Voting for Council

Angela Allgood

There are three (3) people on the ballot for the Peru City Council. You will be able to vote for two (2). You can vote for Amy Arms, Brent Brown or Katy Novak.

Nov 20 thru Dec 2: Mail-in ballots will be automatically mailed to all registered voters.

Dec 12, 5pm: Final day for voting! All ballots will need to be returned, either by mail or in-person.

If you'll be travelling and not able to receive your mail-in ballot, you can call the Nemaha County Clerk at

402-274-4213.

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## Fall Festival

by Angela Allgood

I am just going to say, "Yumm!" Once again the food during the Community Church's Fall Festival did not disappoint. I was actually able to go to both lunch and dinner this year. Lunch was from 11-2 pm. The sloppy joes were great and so were all the desserts and other salads available. Supper was from 5-7 pm and I tried the Cheeseburger Soup. "Yumm!" Again the soup, desserts and salads were great!

I even walked around and purchased a few goodies that different members of the congregation baked and sold as free will donations. There were so many good cookies, brownies, and breads. Something else that was great... the conversations. It is always great to see townspeople and talk.

Kristi Nies stated, "The Fall Festival had a good crowd, according to the Peru Community Church Women's Guild. There wasn't much food leftover at either the lunch or dinner. There were also many very generous donors. The money from the free-will offering, bake sale and raffle will be used by the Women's Guild for community service projects, such as donating to needy families at the holidays."

Great food and a great cause.

# PERU CITY NEWS

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## Door to Door Ghosts and Goblins

Angela Allgood

This Halloween, there was another “first.” This year, a group of Pervians turned on their lights and had kids knocking on their doors! Katy Novak had people tell her if they wanted children at their house for Halloween. They then made up a map of people in town offering candy. There were eighteen (18) houses on the map!

Katy Novak stated that, “Trick or treating was a huge success from my kids’ perspective, and as someone who grew up trick or treating at some of these same houses it really meant a lot to be able to do that with my kids! There were a couple of other groups out too, but I know that some houses didn’t get more than 1-2 groups. I think that if there’s interest next year, I’m going to try to find a way to get the maps into more parents and kids’ hands, for people who aren’t on facebook or aren’t in these groups.”

Rebekah Hutchison stated that they also “handed out treats and had probably 25 kids. It was fun!”

Shelly Hastings said, “I had more than usual! I love this!!”

Kari Lottman said, “We had around 25 kids too. Our street had several houses participating so I think that helped too!”

Sarah Montanelli, stated, “My boys had a blast, many didnt venture to my end of town. I was ready but had nine stop by is all.”

Katy said that since it went so well this year, she hopes more people will sign up next year and maps can be distributed to more kids so the homes will be able to see more ghosts and goblins!

## Call of Special Election

Robert B. Evnen, Secretary of State for the State of Nebraska, is calling for a special election to be held Tuesday, December 12, 2023, to fill the vacancies for two members of the Peru City Council, in Peru, Nebraska. The election is being called pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 32-569 (Reissue 2016), after receiving notice from the City of Peru that vacancies in one half or more of the seats exist.

Registered voters of the City of Peru may file as candidates for member of the Peru City Council. Candidate filings may be received until close of business Tuesday, November 14, 2023, in the office of the Nemaha County Clerk during regular business hours. The terms for both council member seats will end in December of 2026.

If no candidate filings are made to fill the vacancies on the Peru City Council, the election will proceed with only write-in lines on the ballot, at which time the voters may write in the names of qualified candidates who have submitted write-in affidavits. The qualified persons receiving the greatest number of votes will be the elected members of the Peru City Council.

Diane Johnson, Nemaha County Clerk, acting on behalf of Robert B. Evnen, Secretary of State, will conduct this election.

## Notice of Special Election Peru City Council Vacancies Election December 12, 2023

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the qualified electors of the City of Peru in the State of Nebraska that a special election has been called and will be held on Tuesday, December 12, 2023.

### Voter Registration Deadlines

- November 27 - is the last day for online registrations, mail-in registrations, registrar registrations, delivered registrations, and agency registrations.
- December 1 - is the last day for in person voter registration in the office of County Clerk (6:00 p.m. 2nd Friday prior).

### By-Mail Election

This election will be an election by mail. Ballots will be mailed to all registered voters of the City of Peru between November 20, 2023 and December 2, 2023.

Registered voters wishing to vote in the special election who will be absent from their residence between November 20 & December 2, or who request the use of a ballot-marking device, may contact the Nemaha County Clerk’s office at: (402) 274-4213.

All ballots must be returned to the Clerk’s Office by December 12, 2023 at 5 P.M. to be counted.



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

December 2023 Your Country Neighbor 11

# Holiday Sale

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The first snow of the season blessed the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony in Nebraska City on November 25th.

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1100 Central Av, Auburn \$130,000  
Commercial property, 2 overhead  
doors, office space, corner lot.



910 10th St., Auburn \$20,000  
5 Bedroom, 2 bath.



1604 G Street \$259,000  
3 bedroom, 2 bath on  
approx .35 acre  
2-car garage



820 Central Avenue

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Auburn, Nebraska 68305



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# ARBOR CITY NEWS

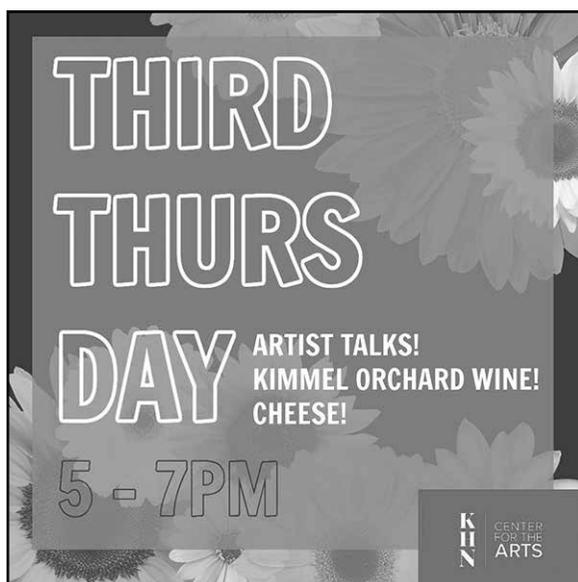
*News from Nebraska City*



## KHN Center for the Arts

Established in 2001, the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts is a renowned Artist Residency program that supports established and emerging visual artists, writers, composers, and interdisciplinary artists from around the world.

Uniquely housed in a residential prairie-style complex, KHN also hosts a public gallery that showcases the work of Nebraska and regional artists, and is home to the Kimmel Permanent Collection.



December 21st, 5 - 7 pm, KHN Center for the Arts  
801 Third Corso, Nebraska City

14 December 2023 Your Country Neighbor

## The Science Behind Good Food Choices

Submitted by Mark Kattleman

Scientifically, making good food choices can have several positive effects on your body and overall health:

1. **Nutrient Intake:** Good food choices often involve selecting foods that are rich in essential nutrients like vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. This can provide your body with the necessary components for optimal function.
2. **Energy Balance:** Choosing balanced meals helps regulate your energy intake and expenditure, aiding in maintaining a healthy weight and preventing conditions like obesity.
3. **Blood Sugar Control:** Selecting foods with a low glycemic index can help stabilize blood sugar levels, reducing the risk of diabetes and helping manage the condition in those who have it.
4. **Heart Health:** A diet that includes heart-healthy foods can lower the risk of cardiovascular diseases by reducing factors like high blood pressure and cholesterol levels.
5. **Digestive Health:** Good food choices can promote a healthy gut by providing fiber and beneficial microorganisms that support digestion and reduce the risk of gastrointestinal issues.
6. **Brain Function:** Certain nutrients, such as omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants, can support cognitive function and reduce the risk of neurodegenerative diseases.
7. **Immune System Support:** A well-balanced diet rich in vitamins and minerals can bolster the immune system, helping your body fend off infections and illnesses.
8. **Longevity:** Good food choices have been associated with a longer and healthier life, as they can reduce the risk of chronic diseases and promote overall well-being.

*Arbor City News,*

A Monthly News Section in *Your Country Neighbor*

A Southeast Nebraska Magazine (with news).

# ARBOR CITY NEWS

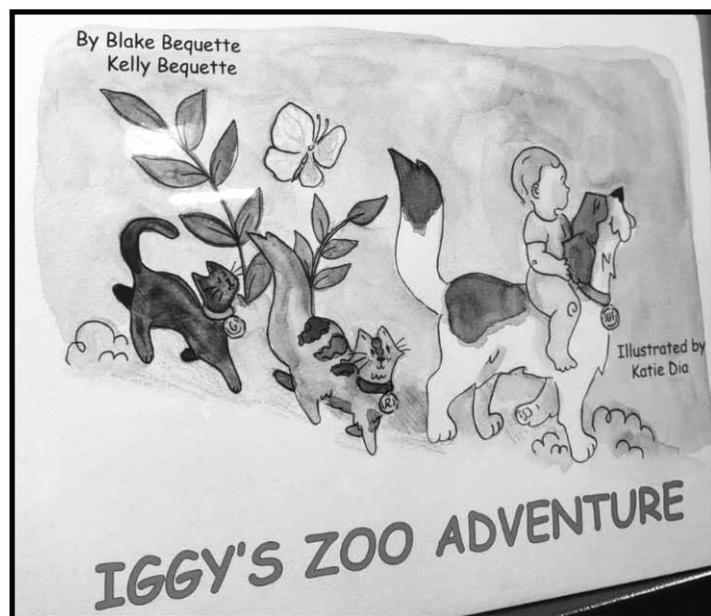
*News from Nebraska City's Morton-James Public Library*

All December programs to be held at Morton-James Public Library, 923 1st Corso, Nebraska City

**Reindeer Story Time**  
Wednesday, December 6  
10:00 AM

**Chess Club**  
Every Thursday  
4:30-6:00 PM

**Katie Dia Illustrator & Kelly Bequette Author**  
Book Signing & Reception



**Iggy's Zoo Adventure**  
Saturday, December 9  
2:00 PM

## *Arbor City News*

is a monthly news section in  
***Your Country Neighbor***  
A Southeast Nebraska  
Regional Magazine (w/News)

**Winterpalooza 2023 Saturday, December 16, 9:00 AM -12 PM**

The poster for "Winterpalooza 2023" features a festive design with a candy cane border. At the top, it says "Winterpalooza 2023!" in a stylized font, followed by "With Ms. Amanda &amp; Mr. Nick" and a small illustration of Santa Claus. The event details are: "Saturday, December 16th from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM". Below this, it lists activities: "Free photo with Santa, cookies, holiday craft, and more!" and states "This event is free to attend and open to the public. All Ages Welcome. No registration." There is a call to action: "Help us give back to our community during this event! Bring a non-perishable item for the food pantry! Donation boxes will be available at each entrance." A small illustration of a reindeer mascot is also present, with a speech bubble that says "Plus meet our new mascot Oakley!".

Free photo with Santa, cookies holiday craft and more!  
This event is free to attend and open to the public.  
All ages welcome. No registration.

**Holiday Craft & Color**  
**Story Time**

Wednesday, December 20  
10:00 AM

**Library Closed December 22-25**

Donna S. Kruse, Director  
Office: 402-873-5609  
Email: [dkruse@nebraskacity.com](mailto:dkruse@nebraskacity.com)  
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"Home of Arbor Day, Where Great Ideas Grow"

# ARBOR CITY NEWS

*From Nebraska City Tourism & Commerce*

## EXPERIENCE NEBRASKA CITY AS A POPULAR CHRISTMAS DESTINATION OR EVEN JUST A QUICK WEEKEND AWAY

For most of us, Christmas is a time to get together with family, break out the favorite recipes, and exchange stories of years past along with gifts.

Nebraska City has proven to be a popular spot for families to gather for a few days over the Christmas season. Two of the most welcoming locations are Arbor Day Farm and Whispering Pines Bed & Breakfast.

At Arbor Day Farm, guests immerse themselves in nature during their stay in the award-winning Lied Lodge. The guest

rooms, meeting rooms, Timbers Dining Room, and Library Lounge offer ample space for families to spend quality time together while allowing for one-on-one quiet time as well.

Arbor Day Farm also includes the Tree Adventure, a fun-for-all-ages nature experience that takes place among the trees. Even in the winter, the Tree Adventure provides opportunities for education and recreation - including a Reindeer Hunt along the Tree House Trail!

Just up the hill from the Tree Adventure is Arbor Lodge State Park. The 52-room mansion that was the home of Arbor Day founder J. Sterling Morton is decorated to the nines for the holiday, featuring vintage décor, holiday-themed collections, and Christmas music. Admission rates apply for both the Tree Adventure and Arbor Lodge.

Whispering Pines Bed & Breakfast, owned and operated by Jeanna Stavas, is another Nebraska City gem. Jeanna has renovated her 1878 Victorian brick abode to bring modern comfort to the unique charms of the home. The annual Christmas Tea is a fun spot for a girls day out, and her space is perfect for holiday parties for your family or business. Jeanna, a two-time Taste of Applejack Recipe Contest winner, consistently wows with her menu choices.

Treat yourself and your family to a relaxing holiday this year in Nebraska City! Visit [NebraskaCity.com/calendar](http://NebraskaCity.com/calendar) for a complete list of activities this season.



*Top: The tea is always ready at Whispering Pines Bed & Breakfast in Nebraska City. Bottom: Arbor Lodge State Historical Park in the snow. The mansion is open limited hours during the winter; the park is open year round.*

*Above: Thanks to a grant from a local foundation, Nebraska City's popular toboggan run in Steinhart Park was replaced this fall, meaning generations more of Nebraska City residents and visitors will be able to experience its thrill for years to come.*

# THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

*Visit Nebraska's favorite hometown this holiday!*



See Arbor Lodge decorated for Christmas



Convince Santa you've been good



Enjoy a special tea at Whispering Pines Bed & Breakfast



LEARN MORE AT [NEBRASKACITY.COM!](http://NEBRASKACITY.COM)



# ARBOR CITY NEWS

*News from Nebraska City*

## Grandpa's Fence

Bruce Madsen

I'm just sitting here in my big, soft easy chair  
Half awake, half asleep, not really a care  
It's a cloudy, grey, and dreary day  
And I'm snuggly warm by the fire, trying to keep the cold at bay.

It's not long before I fall into a foggy haze  
With thoughts and memories of bygone days  
And as I start to reminisce  
Out of the fog comes thoughts of my Grandpa's fence

I don't know why its this I remember  
But it resonates loud and drowns out all other  
My subconscious speaks, loud as thunder  
I hear it in my head, and I begin to ponder

About the days when I was in my prime  
When I stood and looked down that old fence line  
It was built straight, and it was built true  
It had not a flaw, only perfection was there to view

It was then that I began to see in my subdued reality  
How that fence and my grandpa were alike, to a great degree  
They both stood straight and they both stood tall  
That alone is an example for us all

They stood solid and strong through the passage of time  
Anchored deep in the paths of lives left behind  
These two things to which I relate  
Make both my pride and my ego inflate

Just like the corners that are needed to make a great fence  
Granddads are needed to help create a Sense....  
Of direction and purpose for a life that's true  
And a base of beliefs that families can adhere to

My Granddad is gone now and so is the fence  
Only in my memory is there a sense  
Of the two of them together as the fence was put in place  
And the respect they had for one another during life's race

So as I awake from my lazy slumber  
And my mind slowly begins to perk up and wonder  
I feel content that with this story being through,  
I have an example to follow because I am a Granddad too

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Career Days: February-March

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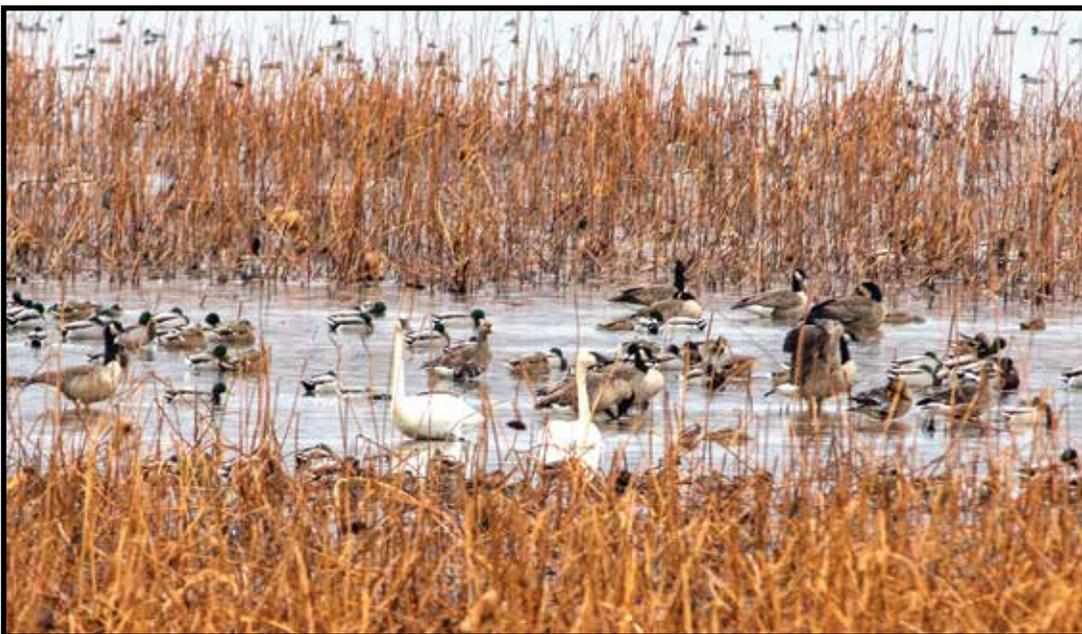
Loess Bluffs Wildlife Refuge Photos, November 19, 2023.



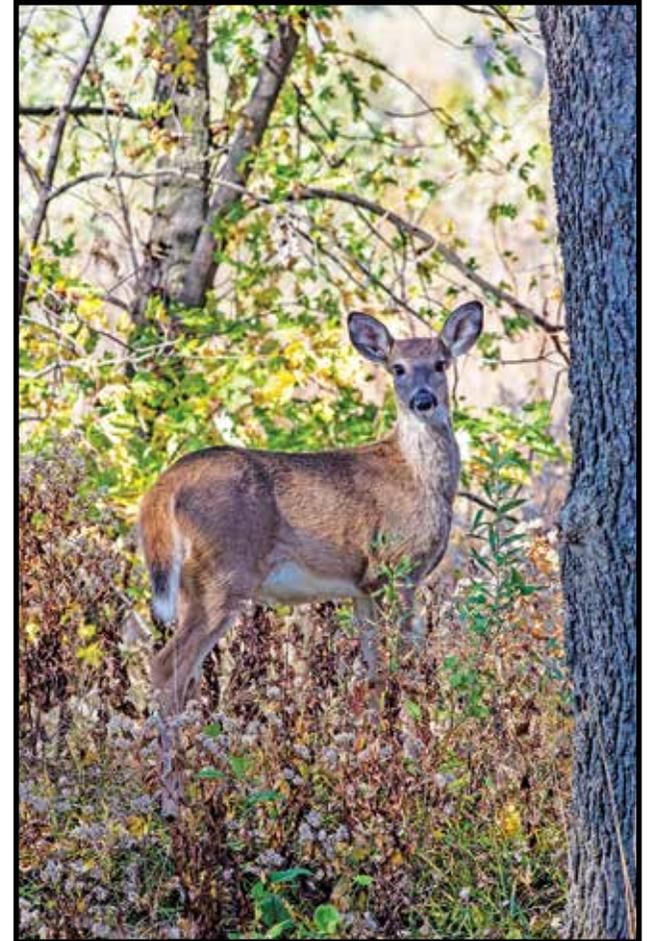
Young Bald Eagles, with undeveloped white heads or tails.



As far as I can tell, this is a Red-tailed Hawk, but it seems unusually large compared to those in my neighborhood. Please advise to; [countryneighbor@windstream.net](mailto:countryneighbor@windstream.net)



Trumpeter Swans among Canada Geese and a few species of ducks.



Deer in wooded area along the “Auto Tour Route” in Loess Bluffs Wildlife Refuge.



A juvenile bald eagle lighted near its sibling on a gloomy and rainy day prior to December 2nd’s “Eagle Days,” Loess Bluffs Refuge.



# inspired DENTAL

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Migrating shore birds amongst the dead water-lily foliage.  
Loess Bluffs Wildlife Refuge, November 2023.

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# Merry Christmas



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## Christmas Is Special

Dorothy Rieke, Julian

What would Christmas be without music that helps us enjoy the season? Many songs of this season lead to wonderful memories of days gone past. Some increase our enjoyment of this holiday. Religious songs tend to increase our belief in Jesus Christ. Christmas religious music often refers to the birth of Jesus. These songs relate the events of that time when Christ was born.

Most of us realize that Christmas is a time of nostalgia when we review in our minds and hearts previous Christmas season events.

Years ago, my family attended the United Brethren Church in Julian. Outside that church was a tall, scrawny cedar tree. However, one Christmas brought that tree into my memory forever. As we drove to the Christmas Eve church service, we were delighted to see that cedar tree lighted with large colored lights. Snow had settled on the tree earlier in the day. Those colored bulbs and the snow covered limbs made that tree magical and memorable.

At times, the composers of Christmas music have stories to tell about the origin of their songs. All of us are familiar with the popular Christmas song, "Christmas Bells." All of us also have heard of the popular poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. During the Civil War days, Longfellow's son John enlisted in the Federal Army. He was then stationed in Washington, D.C. Like many other parents of that time, Longfellow was very concerned for the safety of his son during battles. Fortunately, John was ill during the Gettysburg Campaign. However, later on December 2, 1863, Longfellow received word that his son was gravely ill. A bullet had entered his shoulder, chipped his spine, and passed through his back. It was quite possible this injury would paralyze John.

Finally, doctors reported, "He will be long in healing." Longfellow, in thankfulness, wrote the lyrics to the song "Christmas Bells." Down through the years, this song has retained its popularity with singers such as Johnny Cash and Elvis Presley. Of course, bells are usually rung on Christmas Day to proclaim the birth of Christ.

This year, make Christmas special with thoughts of Jesus Christ and others, "Merry Christmas!"

## Window From The Past

Stephen Hassler, Peru

I notice a lot of the world and a lot of life through my window on Fifth Street, and every day I notice the weather. As I get older, I am becoming convinced that the most important things in life are family, friends, food, and the weather. The first three can be summarized in one word, fun. And yet good weather is fun, bad weather is exciting, which is also fun, so I guess I am saying all those elements of life are important because they are fun.

Weather is the most recent addition to my 'what's important list.' I'm actually surprised at myself for not including it long ago. Everyone talks about it. You find it around you everywhere you go. It's seldom the same even if you stay in the same spot, so it's not often boring; it's often exciting, and always a point of conversation. I can barely stand being with some of my family members, even when it's just once a year for dinner. Maybe that's because the dinner is one of those important things, and they're interrupting it. That's unfair to say, since family is the most common reason to have big dinners. Even with friends, food is merely snacks and drinks... still important though, because it's with friends.

The weather gives us sunrises, sunshine, sunsets, clear blue skies, white puffy clouds, black stormy clouds, fog, rain, snow, and many other variations of water solids and fluids. One or more weather conditions occur near us wherever we are. If we are inside, we look out the window to check the weather, the temperature gauge, and to see if it's raining. I think most people would find the weather much more interesting to talk about if they didn't take it for granted, and realized how interesting it is.

I suppose I should mention the wind. You never notice the wind unless it's in your face (or at your back), or when it is blowing dust around in the air or garbage cans down the street. Breezes are nice... unless the temperature is too low, then they're not called breezes; the comment is usually, "That wind is cold!" In fact, the wind isn't cold, the air is. The wind may only be a breeze.

Breezes are welcome in Summer, except hot breezes... kind of rare. Wind is expected in March. It's good for kite flying, and since the days are warmer, the wind is not thought of as being so cold as during the Winter.

I don't know of any place in the world where the weather is perfect. I've heard Hawaii, but that's isolated. I've heard Malibu, but they have earthquakes, mudslides, and forest fires. Florida and the Gulf Coast have hurricanes. Arizona is hot; even 'dry heat' is hot. I've lived there. I don't care what anyone thinks, when it's 107 degrees, it's hot! And all people in those places can say about Nebraska or Iowa or Minnesota is, "It gets cold up there!" And I must admit, there is "tornado season."

More and more I am accepting of the weather, especially now that I am finally learning to adjust to it. I try to find ways to photograph it in its 'best light', and when I find that picture, I appreciate the weather more. In any case, it's always part of the view through my window on Fifth Street.

<<<<< *Thanksgiving, 1929 Continued from page 3*

And then she began to empty the basket one item at a time, Ketchup – if we had hotdogs. Cornflakes — if we had milk. Pudding — if we had sugar. Sandwich spread — if we had bread. One by one she counted them out, “Trimmings, all trimmings. No real food in the whole basket someone spent good money for this and there’s not a thing to eat in here. And for this we have lost our good name!” And the tears began the flow again.

That basket went into the closet and we never saw it again. But we knew that from time to time, those useless boxes and bottles were left by the way-side somewhere on the way to town where someone could pick them up and be thankful for them. As we were not.

And what was I thankful for, years after that unwelcome gift?

I was glad that some 10 years after we had lost our good name in the neighborhood, the government started a safety net for its poorest citizens, a welfare program with sections for children of the very poor, so that a basket of groceries on the porch no longer signaled to the neighbors, “This family is unworthy to live among you.”

Years later I taught in neighborhoods where welfare was used and abused and I shared the frustration of paying for those abuses. But when I remember seeing my mother cry, and remember how I crept out of the house after that well-meant basket of non-food, feeling like a leper, I am thankful that help can be impersonal in today’s world, that it no longer brands children or their parents with a scarlet letter burned into their souls.

What were the holiday seasons of my childhood like? Cold. Mighty cold.

---

## December

Sheila Tinkham, Lincoln

December means ten in Latin  
But my heart says December is number one  
A long month full of sledding and skiing  
Full of icy days painting the world a masterpiece of ice and snow  
My heart yearns for Christmas  
The gifts, yes, but more so the gifts of the spirit  
Love and Peace and forgiveness  
And an innocent child who christened a  
More gentle place  
Yes, let me savor December, number one in my heart.

## December

Sheila Tinkham, Lincoln

Like football and turkey  
For Thanksgiving  
Candles white, rose, purple  
To me signify Christmas and December  
Advent means coming, arrival  
It’s colors signify  
White - peace  
Purple - hope and love  
Rose - joy  
Make my heart ready for a New Year  
Be like that Babe  
Each day begins fresh  
Choose to be kind  
Choose to be loving  
Maybe then when a brand new January 2024 begins  
I will be ready  
To be at peace with God, with neighbor and most of all myself.  
Shalom



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# P o e t r y

by Devon Adams, Peru

# O e t r y

## RISING MOON

A deep December sky is made of night velvet, with sparkling studs of diamonds pinned to it's yards and yards of ripples and folds. It looks soft and supple, like a big bedspread that was tossed out there, away from the pull of gravity from our pretty blue planet. Suddenly a glow grows in the east, as a full moon rises through the earthly haze. It is a rosy fireball that soon turns cold and hard, distant as a jilted lover after a fight.

## BARELY WARM

Driving down country roads on frozen ruts jagged and sharp as bent metal edges, we breathe cold air that is clear and deep into the distance. Trees have been drawn with sharp dark ink lines, and skiffs of old snow are lying stiffly in the fields. Lights in town are starting to glow as a dusky dark takes away the day, and zero degrees pulls down the mercury.

## MAGIC MOMENTS

A sunlight flash on the wings of a dragonfly; the hum of a honey bee in clover; a sleepy peep from a nest in a tree; the scream of an eagle flying free; a whinny from a brand new colt; puppies sleeping in a pile; kittens creeping; babies yawning; colors painting a sunset; rain clouds growling; snowflakes sticking to your coat; cows mooing melodies; little girls dancing in the rain; wind singing in the grass.

## COUNTRY KIDS

They were a wild bunch, that family from the corner of the county. Living rough and tough, the basics were enough. Fun was running in the fields and splashing in the rapids over rocks in the curve of the creek. Bare feet beat a rhythm, and talk was easy on their walks to a little one-room school. Fall was full of falling leaves and campfire stories in the dark. Winter came with boots in mud and wet snow mittens, and snowball fights. Dreams were dreamed of gaggles of gifts, but times were tight and hope was slight for a big family in a little house. Then each made gifts all by themselves, all wrapped in love that saved the day and made sweet memories.

## CHRISTMAS SPIRITS

In the quiet room an outside tree is inside. It is a fragrant cedar. Draped in strings of lights, it throws it's glow out of the window into the yard, splashing the snow with warmth that is almost real. In the silent night before Christmas, old spirits are present here. They come from other years and other families, but join in the comfort and joy that is part of the season of love.

**By Artist, Devon Adams**  
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