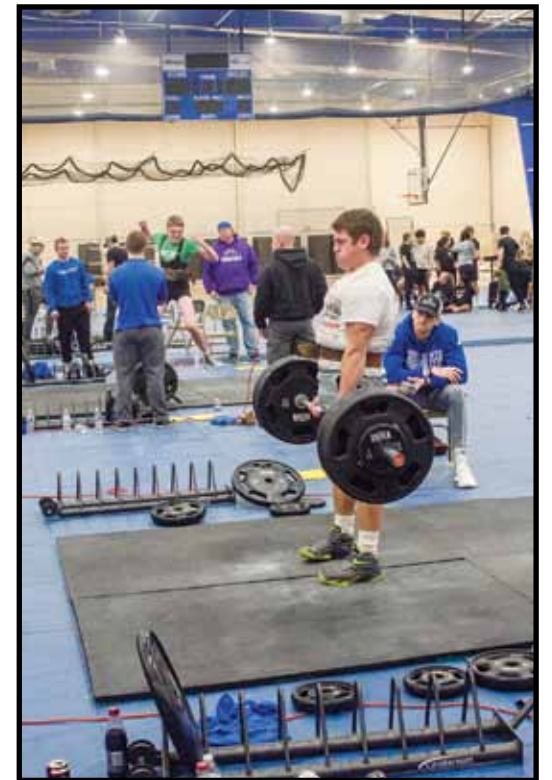


Your *Country* Neighbor **Free!** February 2020

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Peru State's new Cheer Team performed their routine during halftime basketball, January 27
See page 15 for competition schedule.







Johnson-Brock's Ethan Brown lifts 415 pounds at Peru State Power Lifting Meet.
See page 15 for more 'lifting' news.

Voices and Views From the Valleys of the Nemaha A Magazine for Small Towns & Rural America



This male has not always been in the company of the female. She has been alone a lot this season. But I'm sure she will have more regular company in a month or so.

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Your Country Neighbor

Voices and Views From the Valleys of the Nemaha

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

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*“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where
there is no path and leave a trail.”*

Ralph Waldo Emerson



Vacant home awaiting tenants -- Eagle's Nest near Rock Port

February Contributors

Devon Adams
Stephen Hassler
Merri Johnson
Dorothy Rieke
Janet Sobczyk

Thank You!

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The Powdered Sugar Donut

Janet Sobczyk, © 2020

She didn't know
how could she?
of my aversion

powdered sugar donuts
so sweet
too sweet in fact

puff of powder
'tween teeth
makes me shiver

fine white flakes
dust shirt
stick to fingers

but more than textures
the memory
vivid from youth

my half-eaten donut
filled with
tiny black ants!

still don't touch 'em
how could I?
why would I?

until special daughter
picks one
smiling just for me.

how could I not?
innocent eyes
I eat it for love.



Juncos are mostly “ground feeders.”
There is often spillage below bird feeders.



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Another view through my window on fifth street.

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I Just Want to Hibernate

Janet Sobczyk, © 2020

It happens every year. During the months of January to March I just want to hibernate. I was born in Arizona, uprooted at age 4 for relocation to Iowa, and have struggled with winter ever since. Well, in my youth I thought snow was pretty fun sometimes, but I always dreaded the cold. When I became old enough to drive in it, snow entirely lost its appeal. And now that I'm nearing the retirement years, I can barely tolerate it.

I read something, can't remember where, that encouraged humans to embrace our inner urge to hibernate. It made it sound like a natural inclination as a way to get through fewer hours of daylight, so why fight it? It reinforced my desire for stews, carbs, blankets, and more zzz's. It made me feel "normal" while living amongst hardy Midwesterners born and raised in this climate.

I hoped to locate that source to quote it for this article, but I couldn't find it. Instead my internet search yielded a staggering array of articles on hibernation. They were all fascinating and sometimes totally opposed to each other.

Several articles linked our desire to hibernate to Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and gave a long list of symptoms and how to cope. Actually, I found those very helpful. Other articles mentioned "cabin fever," but in general they suggested we fight the urge to sleep more or overeat.

Some experts say that humans have a latent ability to hibernate when given the right conditions, like less light and cooler temperatures (a.k.a. winter). There are examples of humans who survived avalanches (in one case in Japan up to 24 days!) because their bodies responded with hibernation-like responses. Some scientists say extended hibernation in humans is impossible because our hearts lack the animal hibernators' ability to pump excess calcium out of our systems when asleep for long periods. And they warn that extended sleep affects brain function and memory, not in a good way.

Other articles explained how mastering hibernation could be helpful. In fact, hospitals already use medically-induced comas to help patients survive horrendous injuries. The comas usually involve cooling down the blood stream, which mimics hibernation.

Ideas for human hibernation can be out of this world. Literally. Scientists are researching how to induce hibernation for space travel. Sci-fi movies make it look easy but it's complicated. There are always after-effects of traveling in space and returning to gravity. With hibernation there are also immunity and organ issues that can be life-threatening. Imagine losing a whole crew of hibernating humans after they awaken.

I was fascinated as well as repulsed by the ideas and methods being explored. Do the benefits outweigh the risks? NASA scientists seem to think so because they continue to search for answers. But count me off the guinea pig list for those research studies. I can barely survive a Midwest winter.

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In the cold of a winter moon,
the melted silver of its light
pours over the solemn setting
of the silent night.

Not a sound breaks over the
frigid, frozen frost that coats
bare branches and crusty
cattails mired in the dead
mud from summer.

Down from the height of an
ancient oak floats the flight
of the feathered wraith of
an owl.

He is the quiet presence of
death as he glides across
a patch of tall foxtail.

A field mouse pauses in his
journey between bushes,
sensing something sinister.

He is swept up by the grip
of steel trap talons.

Soon he will be a small pile
of tiny bones lying under the
big branch where the owl
perches to eliminate the
remains of his meals.

INHERITANCE

If we stirred the
alphabet soup that is
our DNA, we might find
that our roots lead to
strange and beautiful
branches of our own
families. Science is
an explorer with long
tentacles, like an octopus
who is always reaching
for information about
his world. Every day he
finds something new that
connects to all that he
has learned before. Some
finds lead to brand new
ideas that ask more
questions than they
answer. One day, we
may find that our roots
extend across the distance
of time and space that is
the infinite universe.

P o e t r y

by Devon Adams, Peru

CHOCOLATE LOVERS

The romance month pairs
chocolate with love and
devotion, or at least with
last minute scrambles to
make up for a bad memory.
No matter the reason for
the gift, when the lid is lifted
on a precious box of delight,
the aroma alone is enough
to grant a pardon for being
forgetful. To taste is to travel
to another dimension that
exists from one creamy
center to the next. Time
is suspended, along with
necessary tasks, as the
caffeine kicks in and flavor
rules. Calories are hiding
around the corner as one
little square follows other
squares, along with oblongs
of nirvana. Sometimes, it
is enough to blot out the
real world just long enough
to realize that there surely
is heaven on earth now
and then, here and there.

HOW LONG?

The sun rolls across
the blue acres of sky,
creeping slowly. For
awhile, we watch the
light come and go,
thinking that time is
forever, and so are
we. But one day
we see more days
behind than are
ahead, and we know
that our memories
have tricked us. Bright
events shine for us as
recent, but by the
calendar, they are far
away. Tomorrow is a
question. But now is
here and it is real.

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RED HEARTS

It's time for construction
paper, scissors, glue and
lace doilies to appear.
The kids we were, and
the kids we still remain,
remember cutting out red
hearts to give to our fellow
students in those early days
before we found out about
the ups and downs of love.
Some of the cards were
special, with extra lace and
ribbons, graced with fancy
flourishes of handwriting
dripping with emotion and
sticky glue that stuck to
our fingers and clothes.
It seemed simple to give
our secret crush a card
that would be the magic
trick to make them not only
notice us, but fall madly in
love forever. But forever
usually lasted only until the
end of the school day, when
we watched our chosen
target leave carrying books
for someone else.

THE BLUE SQUAD

They did a quick layover
in the morning sunshine
between the snow and
the fog and the ice that
come when winter is an
over-ripe guest, but still
full of menace.
Water in the bird baths
was clear for a few hours,
as Spring sent a quick
message that she'll be
coming to stay soon.
As I watched from my
kitchen window, six fat
feathered bodies came
in for a landing on the
rims of the old skillet.
Where these phantoms
came from, I don't know.
Either their range is huge,
or they hide from me all
of the time. It made my
day to see the shimmer
of their beautiful wings
and rusty bellies, as the
bluebirds descended from
the polished cobalt sky.

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- (A) '12 JD 825i Gator, 1047 hrs, dlx cab frame, pwr steering.....\$10,750
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- (S) '14 JD Z930R, 1094.5 hrs, 54" MOD deck, sus seat.....\$6,900
- (A) '16 JD 855D Gator, 273 hrs, power steering, roof, windshield.....\$13,500
- (A) '13 JD 825i Gator, 465 hrs, pwr steering, roof, turn signal kit.....\$12,900



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8 February 2020 Your Country Neighbor These House Finches appear to be in courtship already.

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<<<<<<<< *Diary, Continued from page 10*

plenty left over, so we made a big batch of scalloped potatoes and ham. There was still plenty left over to take another 18 sliders to another family gathering. After a couple more sandwiches and ham-and-egg breakfasts, it was down to the bone and whatever bits of meat were still clinging to it.

I considered checking with a friend who has a dog that might like the bone. But then I realized I had a half a bag of dried 15-bean soup mix in the cupboard. It was a little past the best-by date, but it's dried beans, right? So, I used up the dried beans and the hambone. Waste not, want not. Plenty of people in the world would be thrilled to have a bowl of ham and bean soup, so who am I to turn up my nose at it?

That said, I'm not really a huge fan of ham and bean soup. I would never buy a ham bone just to make a pot of it. In fact, I'm pretty sure the half a bag of beans was from Christmas 2018, when I also had a hambone in the fridge calling out to me with admonishments to turn from my recent dietary extravagance and dine a bit more austerely for a few days. I consider it a sort of pre-Lenten abstinence.

So, that's my tale of the lost razor and the leftover hambone. I'm pretty sure that if I related that to my grandchildren they would completely miss the point. But, at least some of you, dear readers, are of a generation that understands making do and doing without. It's good to practice a little self-denial once in a while, to remind ourselves of how much we truly take for granted.

Now...try not to overdo it too much with the Valentine's Day gifts and candy!!!!

Your Relatives and Friends

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HEARTS, HEARTS, HEARTS

Dorothy Rieke, Julian

February is a month of "hearts." Hearts bring to mind Valentine's Day, a holiday promoting remembering others with certain messages ranging from true love to friendships to humorous.

Valentine hearts touch emotions because our hearts are thought to be the centers of our being and sensibilities. With this in mind, the heart affects one's ability for affection, generosity, and sympathy. It also represents inner strengths, character, and fortitude.

Hearts are used in country type decorating, in greeting card designs, and in all kinds of creative endeavors. Usually red or pink in color, these are popular symbols designating certain emotions such as love, devotion, and kindness.

Hearts also play a role in expressing our ideas and hopes and behavior. Many "heart expressions" offer opportunities to describe, relate, or influence. The following give popular heart expressions with definitions:

"Dear heart" refers to a courageous, lovable, and loyal person.

"One's heart is in the right place." Doing the right things at the right time.

"Wear one's heart on one's sleeve." Emotions are obvious through behavior. "Break one's heart" Events bring grief, disappointment, and sadness.

"From the bottom of my heart" represents sincerity.

"After one's own heart." One's personal preference and desires are paramount.

"At heart" refers to essentially or fundamentally.

"Do one's heart good." Events lift spirits to happiness.

"One's heart is in the right place." Doing the right things.

"Have a heart." Being compassionate and caring.

"Heart and soul." All effort is put forth to achieve.

"Lose Heart." Discouragement and disappointment reigns.

"Lose one's heart to someone" usually means falling in love.

"Near one's heart." Important or close.

"Set one's heart on" To want something above all else.

"With all one's heart." Put forth all effort.

"Take heart." Be encouraged, have hope.

Hearts are decorative and meaningful in some cases. They represent sincerity and faithfulness. They are good choices for a Valentine's Day card.

(Icy) Window On Fifth Street

Stephen Hassler

Most days in January I saw snow through my window on fifth street. Our first “snowfall” this month was a very wintry one. About two inches of snow preceded by an hour or two of sleet that presented us that worst of all wintry moisture forms; ICE. Ice on streets, sidewalks, and annoyingly, on windshields!

For too many Nebraska Winters I spent too many minutes chipping ice from my car’s windows before driving to school or work. And that usually meant “early” in the morning, when it was often very cold, and sometimes dark. When at last I said goodbye to apartment living and moved into a house with a garage, there was temporary relief until the garage filled up with other stuff. So off-and-on throughout my lifetime, there was ice on my windshield.

Fast forward to an easier time; car “heaters” warm up faster now, and it only takes a few minutes for the windshield to get so warm that the ice just slides off the glass. My younger life might have been easier if I had spent a few minutes keeping warm in the house while the heater performed that unsavory ‘chipping’ task, even for the extra time it would have taken for less efficient “heaters.”

In the present day, even with one vehicle protected in my garage, I have other windshields that are exposed to ice, but these days, I let the heater do the “chipping.”

Am I more wise now or have I just found common sense by realizing an easier way to accomplish an unpleasant task? Not that we should sit when we could stand, or walk when we could run. Electrical appliances, like dishwashers and clothes dryers (and heaters), save time and effort, but may reduce movement, like what it takes to hang wet laundry on a “clothes line” in the back yard, or standing at the sink scrubbing dishes. But scrubbing dishes is almost as unpleasant as chipping ice.

Why do we prefer that unpleasant tasks be easier? The answer is obvious. Life is hard. We welcome “easy” when possible. Is there a negative side to this alternative? Sometimes. TV dinners come to mind, but I prefer my own cooking anyway. Having said that, I make cooking easier by preparing a week’s worth of a few favorite foods, including a crock pot of chili to name one. So most days my meal preparation is merely “heating up leftovers.” My microwave is a valued appliance.

Perhaps “balance” is what should be strived for when it comes to accomplishing tasks. Some days it might just feel better to hang clothes outside. For me it always feels better to let the heater do the ice chipping. Balance easy with difficulty, efficiency with “what feels good,” but get it done.

So treat yourself with what feels right. Do what you can to stay healthy. And use the ice chipper less often.



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Through my window on fifth street, in January.



Peru State College Women's Basketball

January 2020





Peru State College Men's Basketball

January 2020



PERU STATE COLLEGE NEWS

Annual “Wild Game Feed” Sunday, February 9th.

The Peru State Football Booster Club has set their date for their annual Wild Game Feed. This year’s event will be held on Sunday, February 9, 2020.

Everyone should understand that this is not just for men. Women and children like wild game, too! And if you do not care for wild game, you can come for other delectables or come later for the various auctions and raffles.

The annual feed will be held at the Eagles Club in Auburn, Neb., as it has been for several years. The doors will open at 1 p.m. with the dinner being served at 2 p.m. All types of wild game will be available including possibly venison in various dishes, waterfowl, pheasant, and other items to test anyone’s palettes.

For those not quite sure about wild game, but want to participate in other ways, there will be some “regular” food as well. Donations of game are welcome by contacting long-time Booster Club President Rick Jansen (Auburn). He noted, “All of the surrounding communities have been very supportive of this event in the past and we trust they will once again be able to call upon your assistance.”

Hors d’oeuvres of different kinds will be served prior to the dinner that will give all attending the opportunity to peruse the silent auction table and to purchase raffle tickets for either a gun raffle or dollar raffle. Door prizes will also be given to anyone purchasing a ticket.

Any Peru State Booster Club member may be contacted in order to purchase tickets. A list of board members can be found on the football page of the athletic department website at <https://goo.gl/eFhapv>. Cost is \$15 per person, but a Peru State student with an ID can attend for \$7.50.

Mike Gerdes (Auburn), the long-serving secretary for the group, stated that all of the events the Booster Club hosts help raise funds which all go back into the betterment of the Bobcat football program.

For more information and/or tickets, feel free to contact any of the Booster Club Board members.

Eight Bobcat Teams on Track for Scholar Team Status

Eight of the nine Peru State varsity athletic teams eligible for NAIA Scholar Team status at the end of the academic year are on track to earn the honor following the first semester.

The NAIA requires a team to have a composite 3.0 grade point average (gpa) which reflects all members of a team who were certified during that academic semester for eligibility purposes.

Following the first semester, the Bobcat golf team had the highest team grade point average as they finished with a 3.8056. Members of the golf team include junior Vivian Brown (Wichita, Kan.), junior Taylor Finke (Battle Creek), sophomore Sydney Neal (Peru), and senior Kayla Myers (Sidney, Iowa). Finke finished the semester with a perfect 4.0.

Of the junior varsity programs, the women’s basketball team led the way as they had a cumulative team grade point average of 3.46.

The final calculations will be made at the end of the 2019-20 academic year following all grades being posted in the middle of May.

The 17th Annual Peru State Power Lifting Meet



Lexington Power Lifter struggles with 285 pounds!

Over 170 lifters from high schools across Nebraska and Iowa competed in the PSC Activity Center on January 11th. Several state records were broken including the 505 pound deadlift by Arthur Deseck (165 lb class), of Omaha’s *Gross Catholic High School*.

Lexington, Nebraska, placed first in both girls and boys divisions.

Peru State is a common venue for high school meets.

Editor’s Note; Johnson-Brock’s Ethan Brown lifted 415 pounds! See Photo on Page 1.

First Competition for Bobcat Cheer

Peru State history was made Friday night in Olathe, Kansas, as the Bobcat cheerleading team participated in its first-ever competition.

The College added competitive cheer officially during the 2019-20 year. Head coach Brooke Earnest, and student assistants, increased their squad size to 28. Over the course of the Fall, the coaches conducted tryouts to determine the 18 who would form Peru State’s first competitive team.

Friday night at the MidAmerica Nazarene Invitational, the Bobcats competed for the first time and finished in fourth behind perennially tough teams. The ‘Cats scored 49.8 points.

The Bobcats will compete in two additional invitationals in consecutive days following their opening competition. They will travel to Atchison, Kansas, to take part in the Benedictine Invite on February 2, and then compete in the Concordia Invite on Feb. 12 in Seward.

The Heart of America Athletic Conference Championship will be hosted by MidAmerica Nazarene in Olathe, Kansas, on February 15.

Peru State may participate in a couple of duals, but those are yet to be officially scheduled.”



'19-'20 BOBCAT BASKETBALL

MEN'S

11/29	Northwestern College	Sioux Center, IA	5:00 p.m.
11/30	Dordt College	Sioux Center, IA	4:00 p.m.
12/2	MidAmerica Nazarene Univ.	Peru, NE	7:30 p.m.
12/5	Baker Univ.	Baldwin City,	7:30 p.m.
12/7	Clarke Univ.	Peru, NE	2:00 p.m.
12/14	Central Methodist Univ.	Fayette, MO	4:00 p.m.
12/28	Concordia Univ.	Seward, NE	3:00 p.m.
1/4	Mount Mercy Univ.	Peru, NE	2:00 p.m.
1/8	Grand View Univ.	Des Moines, IA	7:30 p.m.
1/11	William Penn Univ.	Oskaloosa, IA	4:00 p.m.
1/15	Benedictine College	Peru, NE	7:30 p.m.
1/18	Graceland Univ.	Lamoni, IA	4:00 p.m.
1/22	Missouri Valley College	Marshall, MO	7:30 p.m.
1/25	Culver-Stockton College	Canton, MO	4:00 p.m.
1/27	Baker Univ.	Peru, NE	7:30 p.m.
1/30	MidAmerica Nazarene Univ.	Olathe, KS	7:30 p.m.
2/1	Clarke Univ.	Dubuque, IA	2:00 p.m.
2/4	Univ. of South Dakota	Vermillion, SD	7:00 p.m.
2/8	Evangel Univ.	Peru, NE	4:00 p.m.
2/12	Grand View Univ.	Peru, NE	7:30 p.m.
2/15	Central Methodist Univ.	Peru, NE	4:00 p.m.
2/19	Benedictine Univ.	Atchison, KS	7:30 p.m.
2/22	Mount Mercy Univ.	Cedar Rapids, IA	4:00 p.m.
2/26	Graceland Univ.	Peru, NE	7:30 p.m.
2/29	William Penn Univ.	Peru, NE	4:00 p.m.
	Senior Day		



WOMEN'S

12/2	MidAmerica Nazarene Univ.	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
12/5	Baker Univ.	Baldwin City, KS	5:30 p.m.
12/7	Clarke Univ.	Peru, NE	12:00 p.m.
12/14	Central Methodist Univ.	Fayette, MO	2:00 p.m.
12/16	Missouri Western Univ. (EXH)	St. Joseph, MO	11:00 p.m.
12/18	College of St. Mary	Omaha, NE	6:00 p.m.
1/4	Mount Mercy Univ.	Peru, NE	12:00 p.m.
1/8	Grand View Univ.	Des Moines, IA	5:30 p.m.
1/11	William Penn Univ.	Oskaloosa, IA	2:00 p.m.
1/15	Benedictine College	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
1/18	Graceland Univ.	Lamoni, IA	2:00 p.m.
1/22	Missouri Valley College	Marshall, MO	5:30 p.m.
1/25	Culver-Stockton College	Canton, MO	2:00 p.m.
1/27	Baker Univ.	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
1/30	Mid-America Nazarene Univ.	Olathe, KS	5:30 p.m.
2/1	Clarke Univ.	Dubuque, IA	12:00 p.m.
2/8	Evangel Univ.	Peru, NE	2:00 p.m.
2/12	Grand View Univ.	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
2/15	Central Methodist Univ.	Peru, NE	2:00 p.m.
2/19	Benedictine Univ.	Atchison, KS	5:30 p.m.
2/22	Mount Mercy Univ.	Cedar Rapids, IA	2:00 p.m.
2/26	Graceland Univ.	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
2/29	William Penn Univ.	Peru, NE	2:00 p.m.
	Senior Day		



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