

Your *Country* Neighbor

Free

January 2018

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A Magazine for Small Towns
and Rural America



Peru State College win over
Friends University 85-74, December 15



The Snow Geese are back! Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge, December 4, 2017

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NEW
YEAR!**

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Your Country Neighbor

*Voices and Views From the
Valleys of the Nemaha*

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

Contents

 "Guitar Poems" by Steve Adams..	2
Merlin's "Caffeine Musings" 	2
Winter Colors.....	3
Vicki's "Wilderness Sojourn" 	4
Devon's Poetry.....	5
Snow Geese.....	6
"Diary of a Part-time Housewife".....	8
 Bobcat Basketball Photos.....	9
Backyard Birds in Winter.....	10
"Alzheimer's Affects Us All" 	11
PSC Basketball 2017-2018 Season....	12
VALENTINO'S COUPON!	12

Guitar Poems

Steve Adams



Old guitar strings
Three wedding rings
Enough X's
To fill up Texas

Am I a success or not
Depends on your point of view
It's enough for me
May not be enough for you

Those X's
Damn near put me in the ground
But I'm still here
In the same little town

Am I a success or not
Depends on your point of view
It's enough for me
May not be enough for you

January Writers

Devon Adams
Steve Adams
Merri Johnson
Lee Nyberg
Vicki O'Neal
Merlin Wright

Thank You!

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Caffeine Musings

Merlin Wright

Hanging on the wall here in the basement is a large oak leaf we picked up last fall along our driveway. The leaf is almost round and measures 11 inches wide and 13 inches long. That is almost as large as the 9x11 piece of paper my printer uses. The tree that dropped the leaf is only 8 feet tall. We used google in an effort to identify the kind of oak tree. We learned that sometimes small oak trees in shady places make large leaves in order to survive and later when the tree becomes large, the leaves will be smaller.

Another tree that Darlene planted about 25 years ago is a Sweet Gum. It had colorful leaves and last fall one branch turned color before the rest of the tree. I then checked with Google to learn more and also read that when a Sweet Gum reaches about 20 yrs of age it will produce seeds. The seeds are in one inch balls covered with spikes. Shortly after reading about this I found some on the ground. I also learned that these green balls will turn brown and are sold on the internet for craft work. I decided to pick up each ball and give them to a niece who does crafts. This first year of production produced about two hundred spiky balls that will fill a large shoebox. The sap of the tree can be chewed like gum and that gave the tree the name of Sweet Gum. After a week of drying in the basement each ball dumped out 1/8 teaspoon of sawdust which I learned is undeveloped seeds.

If you are wanting to see a Sweet Gum tree or want some spiky balls for crafts then go to the Nemaha County Courthouse east entry. Walking east to the street there is such a tree on the north side of the walk near the street.

Now to think about two more trees and two similar birds. As I was walking to the barn last November I saw birds in a tree and somehow recalled the name of Waxwing. The birds were eating small fruits from a crab apple tree. Checking the birds more closely with binoculars let me see the black feathers around the eyes which made a mask similar to the ones on raccoons. The birds had two small red tips on some wing feathers and had yellow tipped tail feathers. My book shows them to be Cedar Waxwings and not Bohemian Waxwings. Darlene had planted the crab apple trees and made a chart of all her landscaping work. The birds were eating apples on the Snowdrift Crab apple tree but not the Donald Wyman Crab apple tree next to it. Life is so much more fun when we can attach names to the things we see.

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A Cardinal family nested in my yard last Summer.



The Blue Jay only visits me to get black oil sunflower seed.

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Lost Coast

Make 2018 What You Want It To Be...!

By Vicki O'Neal



2017 was quite a year!...And I'm sure 2018 will be even crazier. But no worries! We can make the new year into anything we want it to be! All it needs is a little tweeking. A bit of elbow grease. And a whole lot of Adventure!

I don't know about you, folks—but last year, I did things I've never done before in my Life!

I went through a time that I call my "Wilderness Sojourn." I quit my job and went camping in the High Desert. I slept in a tent under the stars all alone—far from towns and civilization. All around me was thick darkness with all its strange noises! I had no protection but the Good Lord and a can of bear-spray!

I had no cellphone. No Wifi...No electricity or running water. Just a tent and a hammock...And not much else.

My friends and family all despaired and wrote me off as a Goner.

I camped beside the lake for weeks, only going into town occasionally for supplies. It was craziness, but it made me stronger in every way. More resilient and full of Faith.

I realized that when "Civilization" eventually collapses upon itself, I could survive—instead of despair.

But folks...I haven't told you the worst part of my "Wilderness Sojourn". It happened just 3 days before my birthday. I made a mistake so monstrous, it nearly cost my life. My birthday celebration could've just as easily been my Funeral!

After leaving the wilderness lake, I went to the Pacific Ocean. I was careless that day—terribly careless of the 8 foot waves!

I wandered onto the beach and forgot the most basic survival skill known to beachcombers. "Never turn your back on the Sea!" Well, folks...I did, and it was nearly the last thing I ever did!

An eight-footer sneaked up and snatched me like a rag-doll. The wave banged me against the boulders on the shore...slamming my arm, then my leg. I hit so hard, I was sure my limbs were broken—but my head never touched the rocks.

I would've been dead, otherwise. Drowned. Cast out to sea!

The Good Lord was merciful. My head never went beneath the waves. When I cried out for help, I was carried to shore and deposited on the sand by angels. Surely it was the Angels!

Unfortunately, they'd picked a bad spot to strand me! I'd landed in a little "box canyon" and there I was trapped by the raging surf. The walls of the canyon were steep, and I couldn't climb out. The sun was setting... it was starting to cool off. And I was soaking wet!

I knew I had to get out of there as soon as possible. I watched the surf carefully, and when it finally began to retreat, I made a run for it. Well...Not a 'run'! I hobbled out of there as fast as I could on my injured leg!

I made it out alive, and I'm here to tell of it today.

Folks—I told you all that to say this....We've

all gone through rough times this past year, but we made it! And in 2018, we can do whatever we've got to do to survive.

Times might be tough, but we are tougher! Weird things are afoot in this world. Unprecedented events are underway. But we needn't fear! We've got more resiliency than we realize. Whatever the situation, we can conquer it with the Good Lord's help!

The New Year stretches before us with its uncharted territory. A winding path...a brand new season—fresh and bright as the new fallen snow....

2018 with all its mystery and uncertainty! All it needs is a little tweeking. A bit of elbow grease. And a lot of Adventure!

Launch forth into the Unknown, my friends! Go and do what you've never done. Find your Wilderness and conquer it!

It's all yours, folks...

The New Year awaits you!

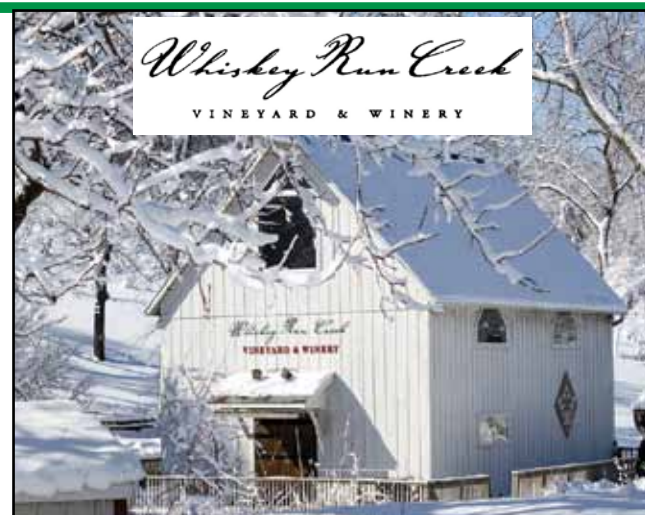
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Poetry by Devon Adams

STAR POINTS

Moon dark nights
of zero temps and
clear clean air make
the sky a tapestry of
diamonds sewn on
soft black velvet.
Star points wink
and sparkle from
places so far away
that measurements
of distance seem like
science fiction. Reality
becomes abstraction
in the contemplation
of the wonder of it all.

FLU BUGS

They're always waiting
to catch us as we run
through the hours of
our days without any
thought given to the
tiny critters that lurk
on every surface that
is touched by human
hands. Not to mention
the hands themselves,
which are, more often
than not, the criminals
who harbor the germs.
Although the caverns
behind our faces, with
their moist and drippy
ambiance, are actually
the major culprits who
manufacture the tiny
infected droplets that
explode from sneezes.
It's a war out there, with
bugs trying to penetrate
our immune systems like
bullets coming from all
directions. And the odds
are high that there is a
nasty little virus with our
own name attached to it.

THE SMALL PRINT

Apart from being
clear and cold and
sharp, icicles are
magic magnifying
lenses. So, knock
them from roofs
into the deep soft
snow below, and
examine small
things, even tiny
words hiding under
louder letters written
in big bold face type.

SAVING HOPE

People who plant things,
and love to watch them
grow, always have those
small packets of seeds
with the luscious pictures
of flowers or vegetables
or herbs on the front.
It's hard to walk past the
racks with rows and rows
of varieties and not snatch
one, or two, or ten. This
is likely to happen in early
spring, when winter is an
overripe guest in your life.
Not everyone is organized,
and these tiny colonies of
future plants can be deposited
around the house, or in the
car, or in pockets, or purses,
or they can slip behind other
things on the shelf. Then one
day, after the summer has come
and gone and another winter
is sitting on your soul like a
sack of rocks, you find a packet
hiding behind a can of beans.
And you hold on to that little
envelope of hope until spring
comes again because life is
always waiting to come back.

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NEW YEARS

It's time again for a
new year on a very,
very old planet. Humans
haven't been here all
that long, compared
to the stones that float
on top of the sea of
magma that seethes
at the center of our
mass. Dinosaurs
thought things would
always be the same
for them until that day
when a big rock
knocked them out of
forever. Time is
dust in the wind,
impossible to capture
and to contemplate.
Perhaps it is irrelevant,
after all, and existence
is only a dream.

WALKING THROUGH FOG

One day she went for a walk,
and never came back again.
It was the street she knew
by heart, with familiar houses
and old neighbors, but that
time it all seemed different and
nothing looked the same. She
felt frightened and confused, but
a kind person found her and took
her back home again. After that
the family realized how wrong
things were, and that their mother
was on a strange journey without
her consent. Odd remarks and
incidents from recent years were
now explained, as they came to
terms with the breakdown of a brain.
But even on her foggy path, there
would be breaks of sun that warmed
her memories and in bright flashes
she would be herself again.

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- (S) '13 JD 825i Gator, 140 hrs, camo, alloy wheels, roof, bucket seats.....\$13,200
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Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

Happy New Year, everyone! If you have read my past January columns, you know that I'm not a fan of making New Year's Resolutions. But this year, I am planning to try to learn something new and meet some new people.

A friend and I signed up to take beginning Bridge classes. Hubby asked who we were going to play with after we learned how, since the game requires four players. Naturally, I replied, "Why, you and Bill, of course."

"Does he know that?" Hubby wanted to know. I shrugged. Did it matter if Bill knew? Isn't it just the logical thing to expect that if two wives learn to play bridge that they would then teach their husbands? Duh.

Hubby continued with another query. "Why not just teach them how to play 500? You and I already know how to play that, and it's a lot easier than Bridge." I asked how he knew 500 was easier than Bridge, since he has never played Bridge. "I used to read the Bridge game column in the World-Herald," Hubby explained. My goodness, the things you learn about your spouse in casual conversation! I had no idea he used to read the Bridge column. What else might he be reading without my knowledge?

I reminded him that we had tried to teach several friends how to play 500 and it seemed too complicated to them. Imbibing during the game may have been a factor in that. It could also be a factor in trying to teach Hubby and Bill how to play Bridge. We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. The whole thing may fall through if more people don't sign up for the class. So far, it's just me and my friend. And I will be out of town for one of the classes. So it's looking a tad iffy.

If Bridge classes don't happen, I will check out the new Earth and Owl yoga studio and coffee bar in town. I've done floor Yoga off-and-on for a number of years. Lately, I've been more faithful. Funny how when you start to notice the effects of advancing years, you get more motivated to work at fitness.

Floor Yoga is great for relaxation, joint stiffness, stretching and working certain muscles. But it doesn't do much to improve one's balance. I read recently that the ability to stand on one foot, with your eyes closed, and your arms crossed over your chest, for ten seconds is an indicator of longevity. If you are my age and can't do it, you have a substantially higher risk of dying within ten years. The article I read did not explain the connection. Perhaps it's related to one's ability to avoid falls, which are a major cause of death among the elderly (or the "geriatric," as I am now referred to in medical circles). I tried, and passed, the ten-second test. But my balance can be wobbly. I sometimes find myself tilting toward the south while hanging laundry on the clothesline. I blame it on the fact that our lawn starts to slope that way right under the line. But maybe it's just me. So I'll be looking for a Yoga class designed to improve my balance.

I will probably not be able to convince Hubby to take Yoga classes with me, although he occasionally joins me on the floor in the living room. But, he might be interested in the coffee and pastry offered at the studio.

At any rate, I am looking forward to 2018 as a year of new experiences. I hope your experiences this year are interesting and life-changing in a positive way for you.



Bobcat Basketball

Peru State vs Friends University, Win 85-74, December 15, 2017



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Alzheimer's Affects Us All



Live Well, It's Your Best Step For Brain Health

By Lee Nyberg

Did you know over 6 million people have Alzheimer's in North America? Since cognitive impairment can begin as early as the 20s, it is never too soon to take steps towards better brain health. Whether it's to finally beat that Sunday crossword or prevent early signs of Alzheimer's, keeping your brain stimulated can benefit you throughout your life.

Take a look at the four lifestyle factors below. Consider implementing some of these suggestions in your life to promote optimal brain health and well-being.

Activities

Brain-stimulating activities may help reduce the risk of Alzheimer's.

- Play brain games such as crosswords or Sudoku.
- Pick up new books to read from the library or bookstore.
- Learn something new. Find your spot: attend a cooking class, watch a YouTube video about a new type of craft, ask a friend to teach you to knit, attend the University of Nebraska, Lincoln's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) for classes on many subjects. (The next term starts January 22, 2018.)

Diet

Eat food that gives energy to combat fatigue and keeps you as strong as possible. Try the MIND diet to get the nutrients your brain needs. This diet includes: green leafy vegetables, berries, nuts, beans, whole grains, fish, poultry, olive oil, and moderate amounts of alcohol (preferably red wine). It recommends avoiding red meat, butter, cheese, pastries, sweets, and fried food.

- Nutritional needs change as we age, so it is important to incorporate healthy nutrition into our daily routine. Everything from the way someone perceives smell to how much food they need to eat may be different. Focus on eating small meals that incorporate the following:
- Water flavored with lemons or berries for hydration
- Lean meat, nuts, or eggs to increase protein levels
- Nutritious and delicious smoothies to increase fruit and veggie intake.

Exercise

Daily physical activity is important for keeping your brain sharp and your body in peak physical condition.

- Enjoy nature and go on a walk or hike; even 15 minutes of light exercise is beneficial.
- Join an aerobics class at the gym, like zumba or swimming.
- Practice yoga to center your mind and body. If you're new to yoga, take a beginner's class. Yoga is meant to be done at each person's own pace and ability.

Sleep

Make sleep a priority. Research shows sleep problems may be an early indicator of Alzheimer's and poor overall brain health.

- Avoid eating or drinking alcohol two or three hours before bed.
- Create a mindfulness routine where you meditate on what you are thankful for and focus on your breathing for a few minutes before falling asleep.
- Stay active during the day and avoid naps too close to bedtime.

Motivate yourself so each day you make at least one healthy choice. Find healthy activities you look forward to, whether cooking a new recipe or challenging your mind to a new brain game. Create a routine that naturally incorporates healthy habits for your cognitive brain health and physical fitness and mental well-being. Knowing you're doing your best will give you a boost, right from the first step.

Lee Nyberg seeks to care for older adults and their families through education and her company, Home Care Assistance.
HomeCareAssistanceOmaha.com.

Publisher's Note

Readers, Lee Nyberg will be 'taking a break' in 2018 after about six years of sharing her informative articles regarding Alzheimer's disease and other dementia. We await her hopeful return in 2019 or before.



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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