



Waiting for Spring; Bald Eagle pair, Loess Bluffs Wildlife Refuge, November 19, 2023.
 Likely one of the two pairs of Bald Eagles that are year-round residents.



PSC Basketball, page 7

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



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“Your Country Neighbor” is delivered to the following communities in Southeast Nebraska & NW Missouri.

Auburn • Brownville • Cook • Falls City • Johnson • Nebraska City

Nemaha • Papillion • Peru • Rock Port • Syracuse • Tecumseh • Verdon

Your Country Neighbor

Voices and Views from the Valleys of the Nemaha

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

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Peru, Nebraska 68421

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www.yourcountryneighbor.com

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Thank You & Happy New Year!

“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

Jubilant January!

A Message from your Publisher, Stephen Hassler

The days are getting longer! By mid January I will notice the late afternoon light lingering longer. We're supposed to have a warmer Winter in the mid-west due to the 2023 La Nina event. I'm hoping that in March I will be able to sit on my porch and enjoy my backyard while working on “Your Country Neighbor.” Others are looking forward to fishing and parades and other warm weather activities. Will seed catalogs arrive this month?



Fishing at Duck Creek Lake, June 2023

Finally, there was some migratory activity at the Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge that was more interesting than just ducks. I miss the snow geese so far this season, but there were several Bald Eagles and many hundreds of swans. A record of more than 2800 swans were counted in December on one day! Among the Trumpeter Swans were three Tundra Swans, but try and find them! A dozen years ago I was lucky to see 20 or 30 swans.

As long as the Refuge is mostly frozen over, snow geese will move farther south to open waters. I'm hoping for some warm days this month. The photo on page 12 shows the Refuge landscape with a Bald Eagle perched on a muskrat 'house' and a two White-fronted Geese in flight amongst swans, ducks, and a few Canada Geese. Snow Geese migrate in February.

Happy New Year! And as always, be careful if you travel.

Stephen

Don't forget to **clip the Valentino's coupon on the back page, and carry it with you!**

A Short Photo Review of 2023



Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson, Auburn

It's 2024. Holy Smoke. How did that happen? It seems like only yesterday that the talk was all about Y2K. But all of a sudden, we have burned through nearly a quarter of another century!!

Think about that passage of time. My mother passed away six months ago at the age of 97 and a half. Even after all those years, she felt the same sense of disbelief that she had witnessed nearly a century of change, for good and ill. I was listening to a podcast the other day that focused on a similar theme: our tendency, upon reaching retirement age, to wonder if our lives have really mattered. How have we spent our time? Did we accomplish anything noteworthy? Is there still time to achieve something?

The odds are that neither you nor I will achieve the sort of thing that would get us on any list of movers and shakers. In 1999, the cable network A&E announced a list of the 100 most influential people of the Millennium just ending. The fact that Elvis Presley and the Beatles made the list might make you think you could be a contender. But when you consider that the other five musicians on the list are Mozart, Bach, Beethoven, Enrico Caruso and Louis Armstrong, you wake up and smell the coffee pretty quick.

So, is there a point in pondering your legacy? There are plenty of self-help books on the topic. Chop Wood Carry Water: How to Fall in Love with the Process of Becoming Great; Pound the Stone: 7 Lessons to Develop Grit on the Path to Mastery; Gravititas: The 8 Strengths that Redefine Confidence. I don't know about you, but I think the ship has sailed for me in regard to those approaches to achieving something worthwhile. I'm just not up for chopping wood, carrying water and pounding stones.

But here's a book that might offer something I could get my head around: The Fourth Quarter of Your Life: Embracing What Matters Most. The summary of it that I found online says it will help you

- Clearly establish meaning and direction for your life
- Develop the clarity necessary to make good decisions
- Identify hopes and dreams
- Establish what you need and want most at this time in your life
- Learn to say no

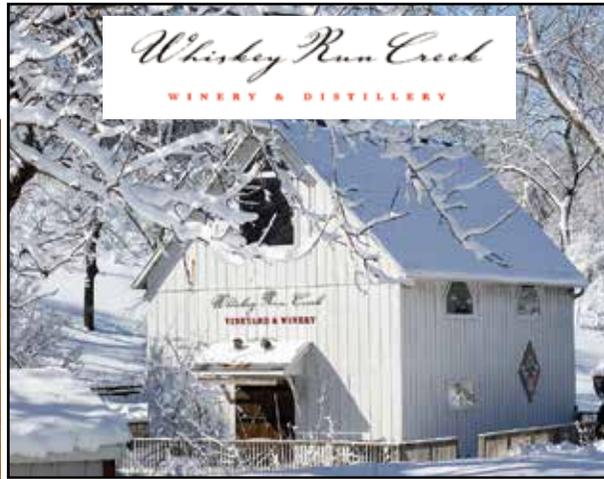
Some of you might want to read it just for the sake of learning to say no. Or your spouse might want you to read it for the same reason.

By now you are wondering where I am going with this topic. If you have read previous New Year's columns by me, you know that I am not a fan of making resolutions. But maybe that's because I need help with everything on the list in that book description! I pledge – or resolve, if I must use that term – to read the book and report back. In the meantime, if your own obituary is not yet written, you might want to give some thought to what your family will say about your life when the time comes. Just sayin'.

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The female Cardinal is colorful this time of year.



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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Santa arrived before Christmas in Peru to ask children what they wanted for Christmas. Santa's reindeer didn't bring Santa to Peru as hoped. I don't think there was enough snow to land a sled. But he managed to arrive on time in a big red Fire Engine!



After a lot of dirt moving, a concrete base appears to be the latest development in the Dome construction just North of the Oak Bowl.



On the other side of campus, the baseball/softball area is being developed. I'm looking forward to the first home games on March 2nd & 3rd, weather permitting.



Postmaster Becky helped the Peru children get their letters to Santa with a direct route (the mailbox outside). See story on page 9.

PERU

IMPERUIVING AS ONE

Mission Statement
To work together to promote a unified and vibrant community by connecting people, ideas and resources to achieve the best future for the City of Peru and Peru State College.

Vision Statement
Peru will be a welcoming, thriving and engaged community with exceptional amenities that attract people to live, work, visit and learn.

Planning Teams
Housing • Infrastructure • Relationships and Communication
Economic/Business Development • Attraction and Retention

PCIG, keep up your great work in 2024!

WATER??

It was reported in the most recent City Council meeting that the new pipeline has only to pass "sampling and testing" before the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, scheduled for January 15, 2024.



As of the end of 2023, still no update on the much anticipated opening of the 'new' Wemhoff Building. Watch for a Feb. Report.

Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging

Angela Allgood

This may be a long name to remember, but it is a name to remember. What is Blue Rivers? How can it help you? Read on.

They serve the areas of Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Richardson and Thayer Counties.

They have services that will assist with Independent Living. A few of the services they offer are:

- Public Transportation
- Meals
- Handyman / Housekeeper
- Legal Services
- Information & Assistance
- Outreach
- Care Management
- Health Promotion and Education
- ADRC Nebraska

They have a “Choices Unit.” This service helps you decide where and how you want to live. It is a service for aged persons and adults with disabilities. When you call 888-989-9417 or the Beatrice office at 402-223-1376, a counselor can help you with decisions of 1) Living in your own home with help provided to you, 2) living in an assisted living facility if that is what you need, or 3) living in a nursing facility.

Another important program that they offer is “Respite Care.” Anyone taking care of a loved one, knows that it can be demanding. Respite Care can help you take “time off” to relax, do what you need to do and know that their loved one is being taken care of.

Blue Rivers Public Transportation System is open to riders of all ages, including persons with disabilities, and operates in Gage, Jefferson, Nemaha, Otoe and Thayer counties in Southeast Nebraska on a demand-response, portal-to-portal, 24-hour advance reservation basis. Vehicles are stationed in county communities and offer regular routed transportation services to 61 communities within the area.

Blue Rivers has 2 Inter-City routes that provide transportation to Lincoln and Omaha. The system contracts with a private cab company in Beatrice for all off-hour or peak time transportation services. Contact an office near you for more information or to schedule a ride.

Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging administers (directly or contractually) 17 Senior Centers in Southeast Nebraska. Blue Rivers AAA also has affiliate relationships with an additional 3 Senior Centers within this area. To arrange for Nutrition Services, please call the Senior Center manager at the desired location. One-day advance notification is appreciated. All locations are open five days a week.

Find out how they can help you and your loved ones. Talking with a counselor is a free service.

Postmaster Becky Wissman

Angela Allgood

Say hello to another postmaster! Don't worry, this one has plans of staying until she retires!!

You may have noticed a different vibe when you walk into our post office now! That vibe is our permanent part-time postmaster, Becky Wissman! She has decorated the place for both Thanksgiving and Christmas so I cannot wait to see what she does every month! She even helped the Peru children get their letters to Santa with a direct route (the mailbox outside).

When you go to the postoffice, you will be greeted by Becky. She is from Falls City, has been married 18 years to Jason Wissman, and has a daughter that went to college at Peru State! Jason works at Hullman's Ford in Falls City. Their daughter, Sam Wissmann, was sworn in as a Deputy for the Richardson County Sheriff's Office December 18, 2023!

Becky said that she loves working in Peru and plans on staying until her retirement (20 years from now!). She said the people are nice and treat her like they have known her forever.

If you have not met Becky yet, go in and say hi! She will always greet you with a “hello” or “good morning” and even talk with you for a few minutes.

Tuesday Literary Club Reads

DiAnna Loy, Tuesday Literary Club

The theme for the coming year for the Tuesday Literary Club is Foreign Authors/Settings. I asked my husband Jim, to find me some books about Christmas in other countries; he did not disappoint. I ended up reading a slew of Christmas books set in Scotland and enjoying them so much I had a hard time picking just one to review for the club. I finally settled on *The Christmas Bookshop* by Jenny Colgan. I ended up liking her writing style so much I read quite a number of her books.

As we begin *The Christmas Bookshop*, we meet Carmen Hogan. Carmen is a shop girl working in a department store in her hometown. There have been rumors of the store closing as many of the others stores in her little town have and shortly into the story the rumors become truth. Carmen is now in her 30s, living back with her parents. She applies for many jobs but with no education past high school and no particular skills to mention, she has been unable to find anything. Her mother suggests she asks her sister Sophia, the extremely successful attorney, to help. Well, that suggestion went over like a lead balloon. Ultimately it is Sophia who has a client, Mr. McCredie, who is in dire need of assistance to bring his bookshop up to date and turning a profit by Christmas. Sophia lives in Edinburgh in a stunning house and will let Carmen live in a room in the basement in exchange for babysitting her three children and cooking dinner a couple nights a week when the nanny has classes.

The first day on the job, Carmen is appalled at the shape of the bookshop. It seems it has not been cleaned in one hundred years, there is no system for filling books, and most of the books are in the stacks that are off limits to her. She doesn't even know where to start and Sophia has told Mr. McCredie that Carmen is a wonder who will save his bookshop. She starts with cleaning and looking at what books are where. She takes her nieces and nephew to the shop on a Sunday to help clean, bribing them with the reward of huge malts when they are done. Enormous headway is made, and she starts to feel that there just might be a chance to pull off a miracle.

Things starts to happen. Carmen is contacted and asked if an extremely famous author can use their store to bring out his new book. Carmen says yes in return for him doing a book signing. The event is a mammoth success, and the till is full at the end of the day. Carmen starts doing a Children's Story Hour and the first book she reads is "The Little Match Girl," forgetting the little girl dies in the end. The children are petrified except for one little girl who loves the story and buys the book. Carmen also meets Oke who is a post-doctorate lecturer at the college who makes quite an impression on her, but they seem to get their wires crossed much of the time.

As Christmas approaches, there are parties at all of the shops on their street which Carmen is successful at talking Mr. McCredie into attending. They even stage a party of their own where the famous author shows up and boosts sales once again.

Of course, everything works out in the end after a little strife. I realized this was just the first of three books and quickly obtained and read the other two books. I can wholeheartedly recommend this book and Jenny Colgan as an author.

Happy reading!

Chili Contest

Angela Allgood

This is the second year for the Chili contest. This year it was put on by Dan Cotton and Janet Hope.

Cheryl Cotton won 1st place, Jake Armknecht 2nd place, and Shelly Hastings won 3rd. There were a total of 8 entries.

The night brought an auctioned pie made by Cheryl Cotton, Karaoke, and fun!

This event raised \$1,300 for playground equipment at the Sid Brown Park.

Special Election for Council

Angela Allgood

A special election was called after the resignation of two council members.

Of 225 registered voters in Peru, Nebraska, there were eighty (80) ballots returned. That is a 36% turnout.

The official results of Tuesday's City Council election are as follows: Brent Brown had 66 votes, followed by Katy Propst-Novak with 59 votes.

Congratulations to our new council members.

City council meets on the third Monday of each month at City Hall.

PERU CITY NEWS

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Wrapping up 2023

Angela Allgood

As I wrap up the last of the news for 2023, we had some other ladies "wrapping things up" as well!

Josie Coatney wanted to do a fundraiser to help raise money for the playground equipment at Sid Brown Park, so she and a few other ladies came up with a plan to "wrap gifts" the same day as the Holiday Dash and Baking Bash (December 16, 2023). They wrapped gifts from 4-5:30.

Josie had lots of help wrapping gifts. There was Katy Novak, Miranda Decker, Sarah Montanelli, and Logan Waring.

There were a few locals that used the gift wrapping services. Plus they wrapped their own gifts after they were finished!

"We had an amazing donation of supplies from people," noted Josie. Josie also stated that they plan on making this a yearly event so that more people can take advantage of their services. She also stated that they are thinking of "wrapping" for two weekends and might be seeing if the Auburn locals would want some help, "Hopefully making it grow every year!"

Kirsten Reeves, one of the locals who had them wrap her gifts said, "Thank you SOOO MUCH Josie, Katy, and Miranda!! Your wrapping job is absolutely beautiful!"

Childcare by Girls' Study Group

Angela Allgood

The Northridge Church and the congregation love being a part of Peru and it's community. They have helped PCIG hold luncheons, they held their own art exhibit for the community to enjoy, and on December 9, 2023, the girls Bible study decided to serve the community with FREE childcare from 4:30 to 7:30 pm, so that spouses could have a few hours together, or if needed, to go Christmas shopping. Jaelynn Lenger, who hosts Bible study for college girls, said there were five families in attendance and a total of ten kids. She mentioned, "Three families were from their congregation while two families were from outside the community, but had connections with people within our congregation."

She also stated that they had the kids decorate name tags with different craft supplies, they had a lot of dance parties, story time, play time, a Christmas Story, a gospel message, a craft of decorating an ornament they got to take home, and they ended the fun night with jello and foam (sensory play).

Jaelynn commented they were expecting more children, but for their first year it "worked out perfectly." She said it was just the right amount of children. She thought it went well enough that the girls' Bible study would consider doing it again. She stated, "It was a really fun event to do!"

Peru City News
is a monthly news section in
Your Country Neighbor

Peru City News
is a volunteer project promoting
**Communication, Information,
& Pride in the Peru Community**

Peru City News
is supported by
Peru Community Members.
To everyone who participates,
Thank You!!



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

January 2024 **Your Country Neighbor** 11

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ARBOR CITY NEWS

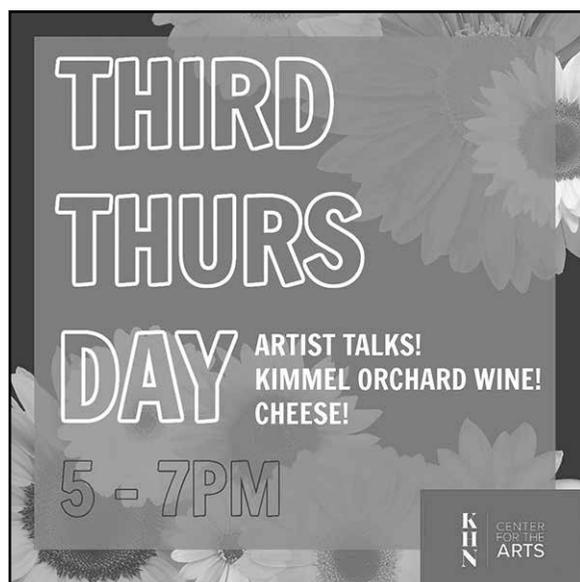
News from Nebraska City



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.



January 18th, 5 - 7 pm, KHN Center for the Arts
801 Third Corso, Nebraska City

14 January 2024 Your Country Neighbor

Jack

Bruce Madsen

There is a fellow in our neighborhood you might like to know
He's been around forever plus a couple years or so
Doesn't know a stranger And he's sharp as a tack
He's everybody's friend, His name is Jack

It's true he's been around awhile,
Developed his own kind of style
If you're anywhere close, you'll be under his friendly attack
Doesn't bother most people though, they like to visit with Jack

A patriarch, he is, of our community
It's kind of a cloak of honor he wears proudly
He came into this world a generation back
And we've all come to respect this man called Jack

Back in the day when he was young and lean
Met the woman of his dreams, her name was Lorene
Their love for each other was not an act
Cause not long after that, she married Jack

If you look at him now you can begin to see
His posture is not as straight as it used to be
The abundance of time is something we all lack
We can't live forever, but I'm not so sure about Jack

Still works everyday and can still rise above
People much younger that don't have any shove
Some look at work and don't know how to react
Bet they could figure it out if they'd just watch Jack

It's true I suppose, that he's not quite as fast
As he was in days that have long since past
But this I believe, and it's a fact
If you want to get stuff done, you better get Jack

One more thing that makes his persona bigger
That was the time in his life he took care of Trigger
Kind of a big deal when you think about that
Even Roy gave his respect and trust to Jack

This is the end of my little poem
I'm sure some words and thoughts could be better honed
But if you think this message has some slack
Take it upon yourself to find out, and spend some time with Jack

ARBOR CITY NEWS

News From The Nebraska City Community Foundation Fund

Nebraska City Community Foundation Fund Selects Two Philanthropists of the Year at its Annual Meeting

Submitted by Nancy Feeney

Summer wouldn't be the same in Nebraska City without the Nebraska City Jaycees and the massive Fourth of July Fireworks Show they have put on for the past 36 years. This is why the Nebraska City Community Foundation Fund (NCCFF) named this long-standing service organization as one of its two 2023 Philanthropists of the Year during the Fund's recent annual meeting. The second Philanthropists of the Year winner for 2023 are Nile and Mary Farris, owners of Valentino's restaurant in Nebraska City, who are well known for their many philanthropic works over the past 30 years. This is the first time in its 23-year history that the NCCFF has given out two Philanthropist of the Year Awards.

During its award presentation, the NCCFF lauded the Nebraska City Jaycees for the thousands of hours its members, both past and present, have put into its annual world-class Fourth of July Show and accompanying day long festivities in Steinhart Park. This event has become a summer tradition in Nebraska City bringing together community members and out-of-towners to enjoy the patriotic festivities. In combination with the Jaycee Youth Softball Program, the Nebraska City Jaycees have spent decades putting some sizzle into the Nebraska City summers. During the NCCFF'S recent annual meeting, Loren Steinman, president of the Nebraska City Jaycees for the past eight years, accepted the NCCFF Philanthropists of the Year award on behalf of this service organization. Loren said he was literally born into the Jaycees. His parents, Daryl and Laura Steinman, are both senators and past presidents of this organization.

"I went to my first Jaycee convention when I was five days old," Loren said, laughing. By being the son of such enthusiastic and active Jaycee members, Loren has literally participated in this organization all his life. He officially became a member at 18. "No matter what your situation, you should always try to put time back into your community," Loren said.

Since 41 is the cutoff age for Jaycee membership, many of the older Jaycees still join in to help construct the fireworks show putting in hundreds more volunteer hours over the years. Some of them have been there for every show over these past three decades. Loren said the fireworks show costs around \$15,000. He said funding comes from sources all over Nebraska City. "Nebraska City Utilities puts a flyer in a Spring bill mailing asking for donations for the fireworks show," Loren said. "The donations that this creates is one of our biggest funding sources." In addition to this, donation cans are set out around town in stores and gas stations. Loren said competitions occur to see which location can generate the most money.

As the second 2023 NCCFF Philanthropists of the Year Award winners, Nile and Mary Farris were praised by the NCCFF for the massive amount of donations they have made in the past 30 years through their restaurant, Valentino's. Scores of community organizations, schools, hospitals and churches have been the recipients of these donations, estimated at around 100 a year. Nile recalls that one year he donated pizza to 28 'After Prom' parties. Donations have also gone out to the Jaycees, the Otoe County Fair, 4-H clubs and area scout troops.

Speaking of the scouts, Nile was a boy scout leader for 16 years. "That's lots of Eagle Scout projects," he said. He is also a 30-year plus member of the Knights of Columbus and St. Mary's Catholic Church Parrish Council. He was on the local United Way Board for 25 years. Nile and Mary have been married for 40 years and raised three children. They now have six grandchildren. Mary has been an educator in Nebraska City for the past 35 years, the first 33 years at NCECBVI (Nebraska Center for the Education of Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired) and the past two years at Lourdes Central Catholic. It's a little-known fact that Mary was the very first Miss Applejack in 1980. Both the Farris daughters, Emily and Kathryn, also served as Miss AppleJack.

In the mid-90s, the town of Syracuse asked Mary to help with revitalizing its GermanFest. She suggested jump-starting the Little Miss GermanFest pageant. "It worked," Mary said. "Families love to see their children in a pageant." Over the years, Mary has helped judge local youth scholarship pageants in other communities.

"Both the Nebraska City Jaycees and Nile and Mary Farris have brightened the lives of Nebraska City residents for decades," said Melissa Turner, NCCFF Advisory Committee Chair. "This simply wouldn't be as wonderful and fun a place to live without their hard work." As recipients of this honor, both winners get a \$500 donation they can give to the non-profit of their choosing.

The Nebraska City Community Foundation Fund is a local, non-profit organization focused on investing in the people of Nebraska City and inspiring a culture of giving by developing knowledge, skills, leadership and the commitment necessary for community engagement. Since its founding in 2000, NCCFF has invested over \$6.2 million in the people of Nebraska City. The Nebraska City Community Foundation Fund is an affiliated fund of the Nebraska Community Foundation. Learn more at www.NebraskaCityCommunityFoundation.org or visit us on Facebook.

NCCFF Continued on page 18 >>>>

ARBOR CITY NEWS

News from Nebraska City's Morton-James Public Library

All activities take place at Morton-James Public Library, 923 1st Corso, Nebraska City - (402) 873-5609

The Library will be closed January 1 and January 30 for inventory

Story Time - Pete the Cat

Wednesday, January 3
10:00 AM

Chess Club

Every Thursday
4:30-6:00 PM

Build a Stuffed Animal Workshop - Bear

Saturday, January 13
10:00 AM
Registration required, call 402-873-5609

Book Club - The Lincoln Highway

by Amor Towles
Tuesday, January 16
2:00 PM

Story Time - Over the Rainbow

Wednesday, January 17
10:00 AM

Evening Book Club - How Not to Drown in a Glass of Water

by Angie Cruz
Wednesday, January 17
2:00 PM

Writers' Workshop -

Join us to get feedback on your own writing and to learn more about the craft of writing!

Email MjpLibraryww@gmail.com to get a Zoom link, if you are unable to join in person.

Free to attend. Everyone welcome!

Saturday, January 20
10:00 AM

Adult Craft Class -

Join us to make a 'Cozy Craft'. You will decorate your own mug and make a bag of tea to go with it.

You will go home with a Cozy treat this winter!

Everyone welcome 15 and older!

You must register to save your spot, 402-873-5609 limited seats available.

Wednesday, January 31
6:00 PM

In our Kimmel Gallery January 4-31

View the works of Kim David Cooper on the facing page (17).

The Library will be closed January 1 and January 30 for inventory.

Donna S. Kruse, Director

Office: 402-873-5609

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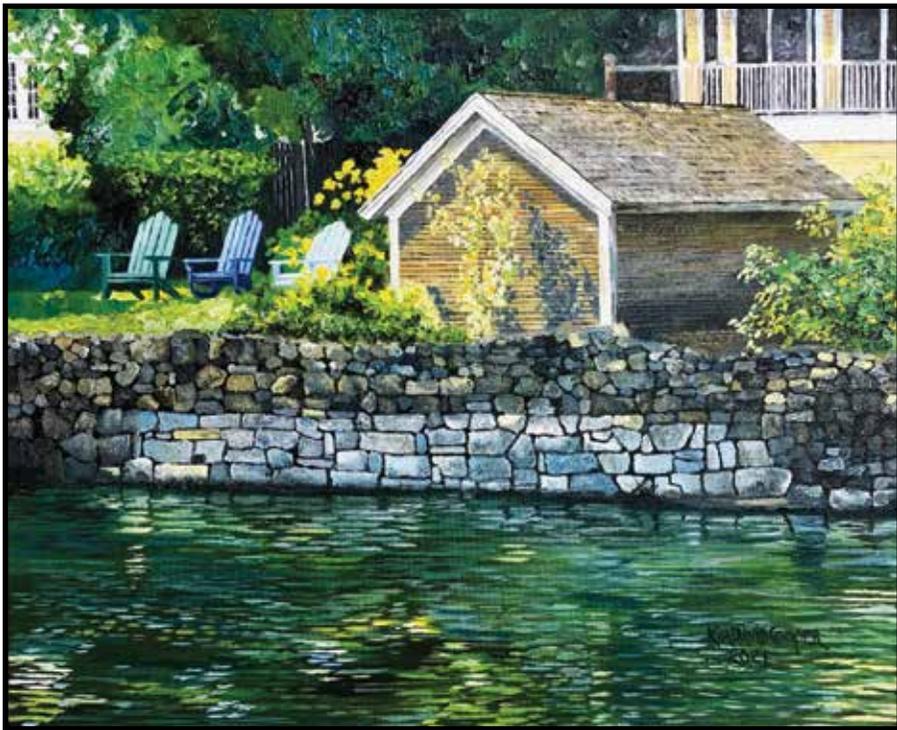


ARBOR CITY NEWS

News from Nebraska City's Morton-James Public Library

In our Kimmel Gallery January 4-31

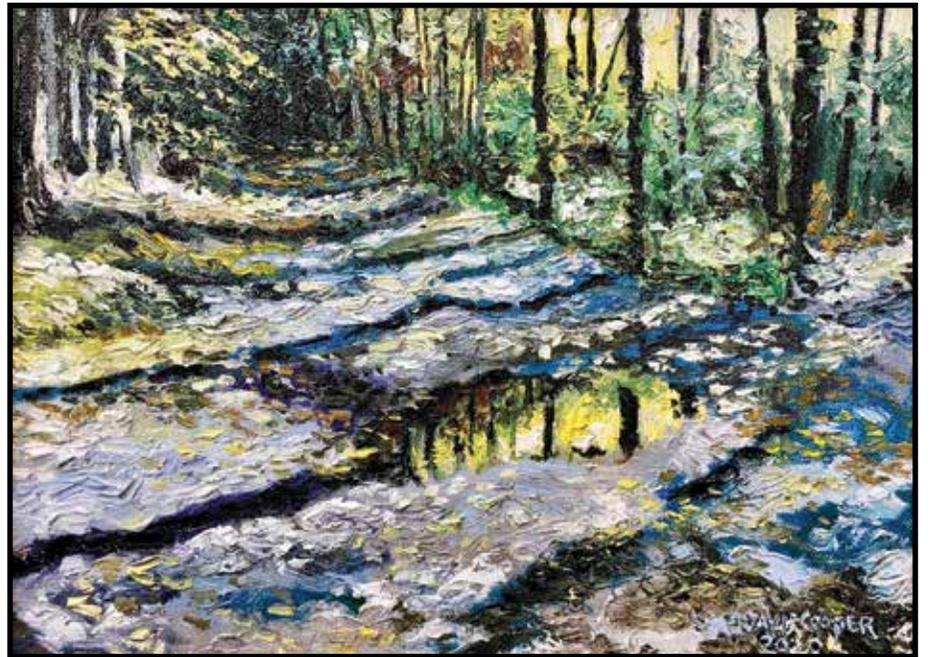
Kim David Cooper was born and raised in Nebraska and continues his lifelong pursuit of "All things artistic". Cooper is an accomplished artist, teacher and business owner. His works are in many public and private collections across the nation and in Europe. Since retiring from 33 years as a professional art teacher in 2010, Cooper has been able to devote more time to his passion for painting. Both studio and plein air painting in watercolor and oil are his focus. Our gallery is open during regular Library hours Monday-Thursday 9-6, Friday 9-5 and Saturday 9-1. The Library will be closed on January 30 for inventory.



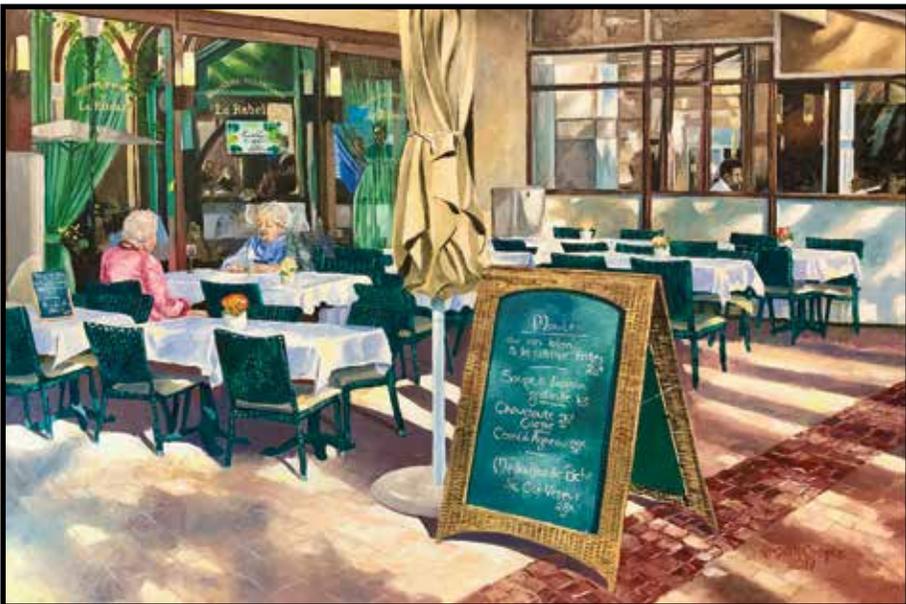
Leaving Essex, Oil



Boothbay Harbor Maine, Oil



Moss Glen Falls Trail, Oil



LaRabelais, Oil



Produce, Watercolor

ARBOR CITY NEWS

←←←← NCCFF Continued From Page 15



Several Nebraska City Jaycee members, both past and current, were at the NCCFF annual meeting to celebrate receiving the NCCFF Philanthropists of the Year Award. Pictured here, left to right, are Bryan Turner, Laura Liesemeyer, Loren Steinman, current Jaycee President; Lynette Prouty, Laura Steinman, Gail Walford, Duane Koehlmoos and Paul Stevenson.



Loren Steinman, current Nebraska City Jaycee President, accepts the NCCFF Philanthropist of the Year Award from FAC Chair Melissa Turner.



FAC Chair Melissa Turner, right, presents the Philanthropist of the Year Award plaque to Nebraska City restaurant owners Mary and Nile Farris. The award honors the Farris' for their 30 years of philanthropic efforts.

Are You a Non-Traditional Student? NCCFF Has a Scholarship Just for You

Are you an adult worker who dreams of becoming an electrician or a plumber, but don't think you can afford the training?

Have you thought about working in the medical field or perhaps becoming a teacher, but the financial challenge seems too big a hurdle?

Do you want to change your career focus so you can earn more money and create a better lifestyle for your family, but don't think you can afford the expense of attending technical school or college?

If so, your hometown non-profit, the Nebraska City Community Foundation Fund (NCCFF), has designed a scholarship with you in mind, the non-traditional student. If you are an adult community member who requires college courses or technical training to improve your job situation, then you should apply for a NCCFF Non-Traditional Scholarship.

These \$2,000 scholarships are open to individuals who have not been on a continuous course of study since high school graduation and who now wish to pursue more education. In the past 22 years, these NCCFF scholarships have spring boarded 85 adult Nebraska City residents into pursuing the education and training needed to put themselves into higher paying and more satisfying careers. The entire Nebraska City community benefits from this by acquiring more skilled workers, which makes this a community-wide 'win-win.'

This scholarship is a prime example of NCCFF's mission of "Investing in People" and improving the lives of Nebraska Citizens.

To download a scholarship application, go to: www.nebraskacitycommunityfoundation.org and click on: Scholarship Application. More information regarding this scholarship can also be found there.

August 1 is the deadline for applying for a 2024 NCCFF \$2,000 Non-Traditional Scholarship.

NCCFF Non Traditional Scholarship Winners for 2023

Submitted by Nancy Feeney

Once again, Nebraska City Community Foundation Fund (NCCFF) presented five of its Non-Traditional Scholarships to adult students in the Nebraska City community who are seeking to improve their skills in current jobs or help them secure jobs in another field.

This year's five NCCFF \$2,000 scholarship winners will be assisting adults who are currently enriching our community in the teaching profession and health care.

In the past two decades, 85 Nebraska City adults have received Non-Traditional Scholarship to help them reach their career goals. Winning NCCFF Non-Traditional Scholarships this year are: Susan Bartman, Shannon Buckminster, Benjamin M. Foust and Mark Fritch.



NCCFF 2023 Non-Traditional Scholarship winners hold up the ceremonial checks they were presented at the annual meeting. From left to right are Susan Bartman, Benjamin M. Foust, Shannon Buckminster and Mark Fritch. Not pictured; Leigh Calfee.

Arbor City News

is a monthly news section in
Your Country Neighbor

A Southeast Nebraska

Regional Magazine (w/News)

ARBOR CITY NEWS

News from Nebraska City



Nile and Mary Farris were surprised at the annual meeting by the attendance of several family members. Back row, left to right: Marcus & Emily Augustin, award recipients Mary & Nile Farris, and Rob & Melissa Farris. Front row: grandchildren Neva & Liam Augustin and Owen & Isabelle Farris.

Register for a Spring 2024 Visit Day!
Discovery Days: February-April
Career Days: February-March

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Clouds

Bruce Madsen

Your imagination can go awry
If on a day you can look to the sky
And see the billowing clouds afloat
While birds and planes spend time cavorting
Around the clouds in and out
Playing hide and seek and flying about

And moving across the sky I see
Shapes of objects in different degree
Angels and mountains, the man in the moon.
And a cloud like the dish that ran away with the spoon
A mushroom, a tulip, the shape of a horse
And things that are hard to imagine, of course

And no one sees the same thing twice
That's why I think that it's so nice
That God can send in images of white
Outlines of objects that give us delight
So when you look up and see the clouds fly
Test your imagination and give a sigh
For tomorrow you won't see what you saw today
But someone will, somewhere else, in another way

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Here are some Snowy Scenes from Winter, 2023



Nemaha County Courthouse, Auburn



Schoolhouse Gallery, Brownville



Below, Brownville Village Theatre. Above, Windmill on H-67.



Whiskey Run Creek Winery & Distillery, Brownville



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No January Blues For Me!

Dorothy Rieke, Julian

What does January mean to you? Some think of January as a time for coping with slick roads, scooping snow, and experiencing low temperatures.

Actually, January can be a time to appreciate the beauty of a snowfall, a time to connect with others through the mail or phone, or a time to read a book by a favorite author.

I enjoy sitting by a window watching the snow fall. I also like to spend time in my kitchen baking and cooking during cold January days. Homemade fudge, soup, and cookies often decorate my kitchen counters during cold weather.

Years ago a good snowfall meant sledding on Julian streets. Cold weather also meant putting on our ice-skates and skating on Rock Creek ice.

After snowfalls, children like to build snowmen and create “angels in the snow.”

For farmers, snow means hard work. They trudge through snow carrying feed to cattle, they thaw out ice in the water tanks, and spend time doing chores most of the daylight hours.

Down through the years, snow has inspired poets to write their feelings about a snowfall. Robert Frost wrote one of my favorite poems. See the following:

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening by Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Window From The Past

Stephen Hassler, Peru

I often tell people who I know well, that I believe I have the recipe for happiness. It is having someone to love, something to do, and something to look forward to. With all that going for you, how can you not be happy?

I presented that “recipe” as part of a “Window” article almost 20 years ago; so long ago that it was before I began uploading monthly issues to my website. That’s why you won’t find that particular “Window On Fifth Street” article. But you might have heard about it because I’ve heard it repeated in one form or another ever since.

This reminds me of the story of the 100th monkey, which is probably not true, but I believe that once an individual has an idea, it is likely that others will realize it soon after. But that doesn’t mean that if the first individual had not had that idea that the others wouldn’t have realized it. Sooner or later, civilization moves forward.

But never mind. The point is that if you have a loved one, then you are well on your way to being happy, if you’re not already there. Because you can look forward to being with them again, like planning a dinner or a movie. Having a spouse to love, or a cat, a dog, a parrot, anything with a personality, then that’s two out of three. You can be pretty happy with two thirds of the recipe. But realistically, one needs to work to live, especially if one doesn’t have a spouse. So, work to do, i.e., a purpose, plus a spouse and a plan for the future (even if it’s just a movie some weekend afternoon), that’s a recipe for happiness. But the job has to be rewarding, something you really believe in doing. Because on Sunday evening, if you are not looking forward to going to work Monday morning, then you need to make a change in your life. So far I’ve spoken of belief in your work, planning something for the future, and love. Another way to put it is; faith, hope, and charity. Thoughts for Spring planning, perhaps?

Peru State College Outstanding Physical and Health Education Teacher Education Majors Recognized “Major of the Year” at the 2023 SHAPE Nebraska State Conference

The commitment and dedication of future Physical and Health Educators were celebrated at the 2023 SHAPE Nebraska State Conference. Four exceptional Physical and Health Education Teacher Education (PHETE) majors from Peru State College were honored with “Major of the Year” awards.

Garrison Dodge (Oakland, NE), Emilee Burck (Beatrice, NE), Marquis Griffin (Johnson City, TN), and Alexis Wittwer (Salem, NE) are the exceptional awardees in Physical and Health Education. Their unwavering commitment to innovative practices and deep understanding of pedagogy have earned them the attention and accolades of peers and mentors alike. They have demonstrated exceptional promise, passion, and academic excellence in their pursuit of becoming future leaders in the field.

The SHAPE Nebraska State Conference, known for its commitment to advancing physical education, health, recreation, and dance, provided a platform to acknowledge these individuals for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the field.

“These four individuals exemplify the dedication, passion, and drive that is necessary to excel in the field of Physical and Health Education,” remarked Dr. Lynott Associate Professor of Health, Physical Education and Recreation at Peru State College. “Their commitment to the profession and their innovative approaches to teaching and promoting health and physical well-being are truly commendable.”

The “Major of the Year” award is a testament to the exceptional caliber of students within the PHETE program and Peru State College School of Education. The awardees expressed their gratitude for the recognition, emphasizing their commitment to making a positive impact in the lives of students through their future roles as educators.

“I am honored to receive this award and am grateful for the opportunities provided by the PHETE program,” said Emilee Burck. “I am committed to utilizing this recognition as motivation to continue advocating for the importance of physical and health education in shaping the lives of our future generations.” The acknowledgment of these four outstanding individuals underscores the dedication and quality of education within the Peru State College School of Education and highlights their potential to make a significant difference in the lives of students.

This article was contributed by Dr. Frank Lynott, Associate Professor of Health, Physical Education and Recreation.

Zoo Lights

Sheila Tinkham, Lincoln

Last time my legs and their veins
Ached so bad
I did not realize the pure joy and wonder of the Zoo lights
Sometime I yearn for the magic of other places
But the dazzling display of lights and music
and the nutcracker ballet music combined
And now I feel like Dorothy
There is no place like Home
Go next year
And let your soul be enchanted by the wonder
Of Life and hot mulled cider!
Happy New Year!

Phillips 66

Sheila Tinkham, Lincoln

The hustle and bustle
Crowds streaming in and out
Lottery tickets, gas, coffee for me
Snacks and popcorn
The Queen of her environs
Rhonda
She knows everyone
And they know her
Giving her fudge and turkey and fixings on Thanksgiving
It is a small thing
To say hi and greet you with a smile
But that is how I want to greet this New Year
Like Rhonda with a smile and hello
To the lovely enchanting 2024!
Happy New Year!

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P o e t r y

by Devon Adams, Peru

O e t r y

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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

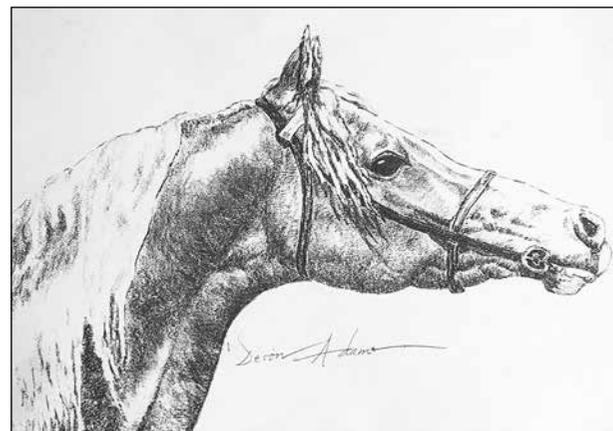
Driving down country roads on frozen ruts jagged and sharp as bent metal edges, we breathe cold air that is clear and deep into the distance. Trees have been drawn with sharp dark ink lines, and skiffs of old snow are lying stiffly in the fields. Lights in town are starting to glow as a dusky dark takes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

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CHRISTMAS SPIRITS COUNTRY KIDS

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.

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.

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