

YOUR

# COUNTRY NEIGHBOR

River Towns & Prairie Communities

FREE

June 2026



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Volume Twenty-eight, Number Six



Old Man River Days--Kids' Fishing Tournament  
This year on Sunday, June 7th, at Duck Creek Lake, 2 miles off H-75.

## Spotlight on Peru



Peru State College was the right place,  
May 9, 2026 was the perfect time,  
to begin an amazing life.

PSC Graduates, page 4 >>>>>

### June 2026 "Your Country Neighbor,"

#### Recognizes Peru with this Historic Reminder

*(Historical summary compiled from public records.)*

Perched on the bluffs above the Missouri River, Peru traces its beginnings to the mid-1850s, when it emerged as one of the earliest settlements in the Nebraska Territory. Established near a strategic river crossing and supply route for westward travelers, the town was formally incorporated in 1867, the same year Nebraska achieved statehood.

Peru's identity became closely tied to education with the founding of Peru State College in 1867—Nebraska's first institution of higher learning. Originally established as a normal school to train teachers, the college shaped generations of educators and anchored the town's cultural and economic life. Unlike many river towns that rose and fell with steamboat commerce, Peru remained steady, sustained by its academic mission and surrounding agriculture. Its historic campus, brick buildings, and tree-lined setting reflect both frontier resilience and a long-standing commitment to learning.

Today, Peru maintains its quiet strength as a college town rooted in tradition. With sweeping views of the Missouri River valley and a legacy tied to education and community, it stands as a place where Nebraska's early ambitions for growth and knowledge continue to endure.

June 2026

# This is “Your Country Neighbor” Territory

Auburn • Brownville • Cook • Falls City • Johnson • Julian • 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

P.O. Box 124 Peru, Nebraska 68421

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

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Thank You!

*“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

## June

*by a country neighbor*

If May reveals, June settles in. What came quickly now holds steady. The  
rush of first growth gives way to something dependable—the kind of prog-  
ress you no longer need to check twice.

By morning, the light is already strong. Dew clings briefly to the grass be-  
fore the sun takes hold. Windows open early, then close against the after-  
noon heat. Fans hum where they need to, and screens settle into place for  
the season

Out in the fields, the change is easy to measure. Corn has moved past ankle-  
high, soybeans are filling in, and the bare spaces of spring are disappearing.  
You don’t have to imagine growth anymore—you can walk it row by row.  
Along the river, June has its own rhythm. Fishermen appear early and again  
toward evening when the light softens. Birds call from the trees while in-  
sects build toward the steady hum of summer nights.

In Brownville, things move without hurry. The winery, the shops, the river  
traffic—all familiar, all steady. In Peru, lawns need mowing again, trucks  
move with purpose, and summer routines quietly return.

This is the month where attention replaces planning. Gardens need tending  
now more than planting. Miss a few days, and it shows. Stay with it, and the  
rewards come quietly.

June doesn’t try to impress. It simply continues. From my place between the  
river and the prairie, it feels like summer has found its stride.

---

### Alter Recycling

Sheila Tinkham, Lincoln

The vast magnet picking up old dilapidated cars and trucks and scrap metal  
The rumble of the trucks dumping and moving  
Scrap from one end of the yard to the other  
The older white bearded man looking like a jolly Kris Kringle  
Shaking my husband's hand  
"Thank you for your service  
I used to treat every veteran I met to lunch"  
The tall lady in the flowery sundress  
Bleached yellow hair and nice figure  
The bearded young worker  
A ready smile  
Aluminum and bronze and iron  
Sorted and paid for after a fingerprint id and a driver's license...  
A day at the recycling center Alter...

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One of two Pelican species in North America, "American White Pelicans," taken on May 7, 2026 at the Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge. The "Brown Pelican" does not migrate, but remains along the coast.



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**HISTORIC BROWNVILLE, NEBRASKA'S  
FREEDOM DAY CELEBRATION**

**Saturday July 4th, 2026**

[www.brownville-ne.com](http://www.brownville-ne.com)

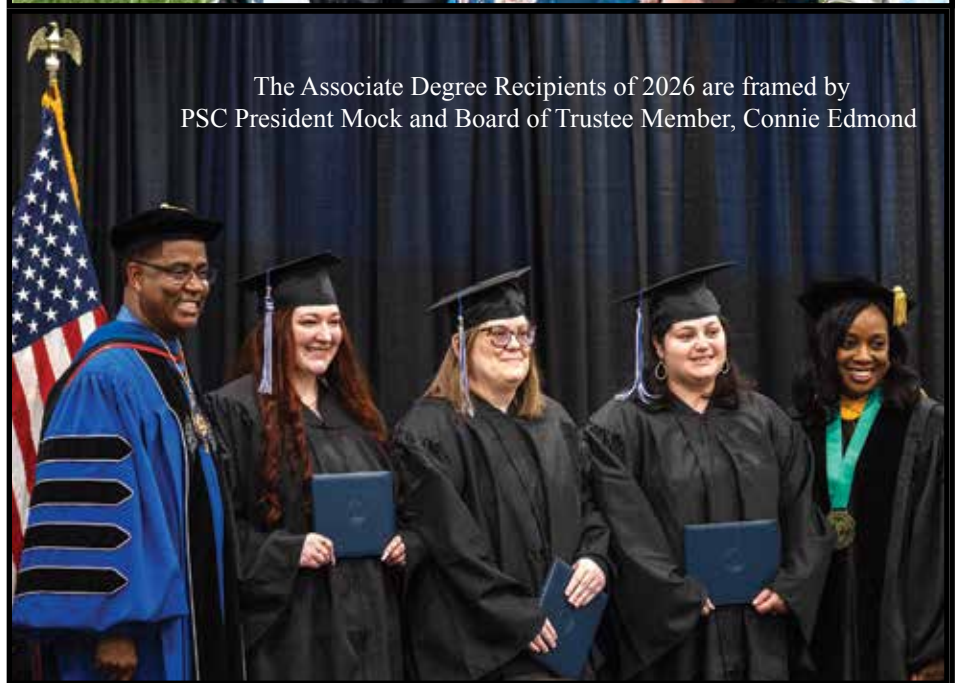
**All Day Old Time Patriotic Fun For The Whole Family**

7:00 AM Freedom Run departs from corner of H-136 and Main St.

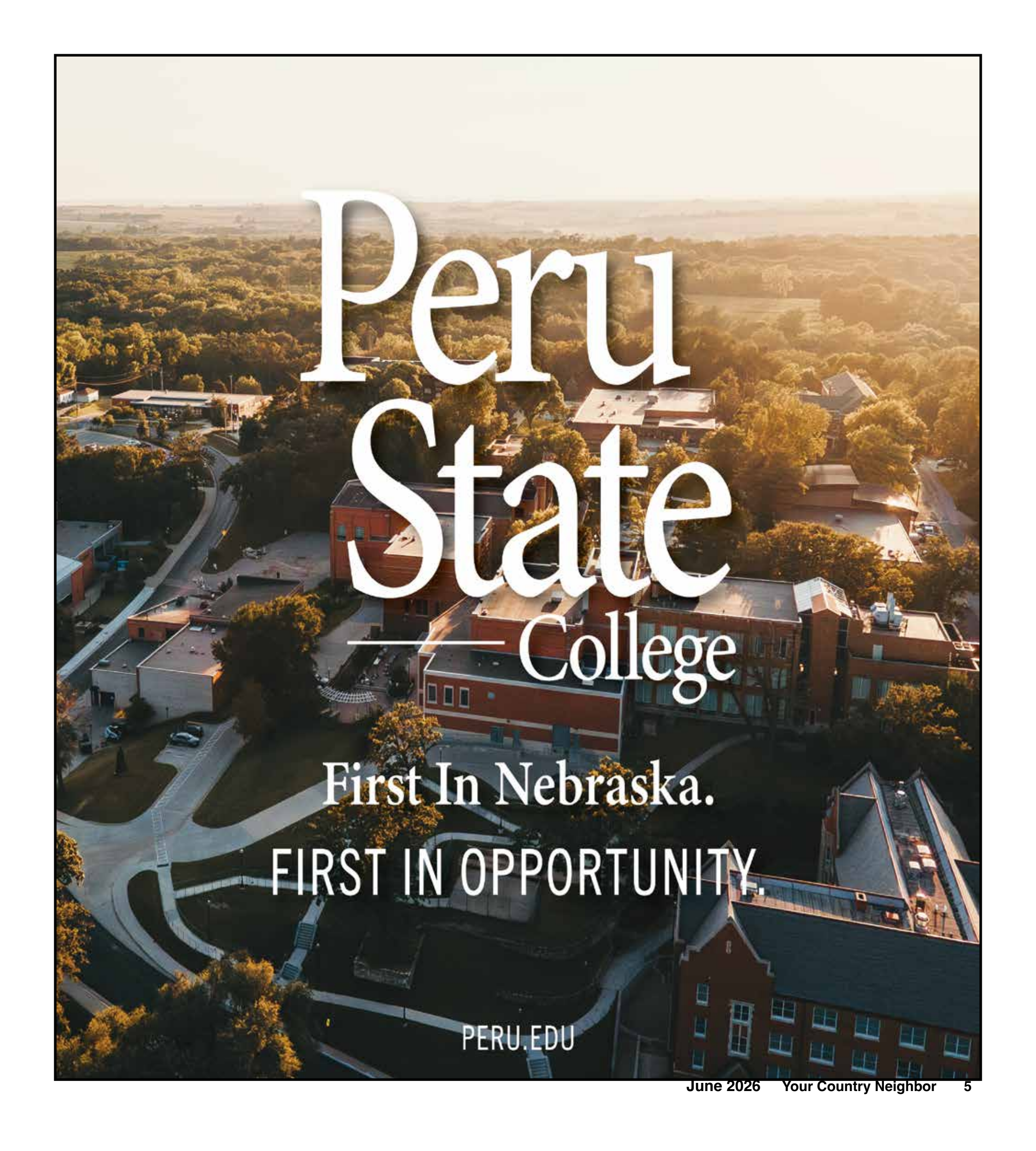
10:00 AM Parade on Main Street between 6th Street and Hwy 136

**FREEDOM FUN RUN - STRUT YOUR MUTT DOG SHOW - LORETTA'S DONUTS - PARADE  
BREAKFAST BY LOCAL EASTERN STAR CHAPTER - QUILTS OF VALOR PRESENTATION  
CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES - BOUNCE HOUSES - FACE-PAINTING  
BROWNVILLE VILLAGE THEATRE MATINEE**

# Peru State College 2026 GRADUATES



The Associate Degree Recipients of 2026 are framed by PSC President Mock and Board of Trustee Member, Connie Edmond

An aerial photograph of the Peru State College campus during the golden hour of sunset. The image shows several large, multi-story brick buildings with red and tan facades, interspersed with lush green trees. A winding road and parking areas are visible. The sky is a soft, hazy orange, and the overall atmosphere is warm and serene.

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Whiskey Run Creek

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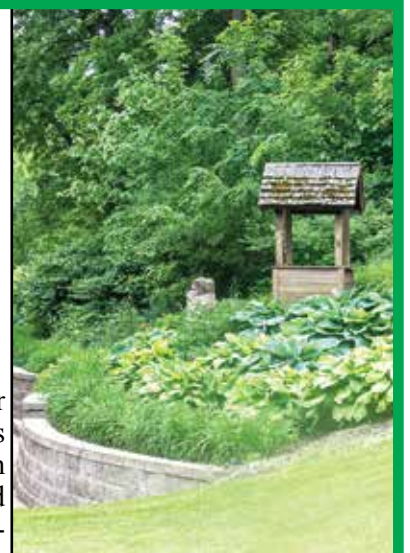
Thursday through Sunday 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Closed Monday through Wednesday

### New Spirits at Whiskey Run Creek

This season we're excited to introduce several handcrafted spirits alongside our wines.

Our smooth *White Rum* offers a clean, versatile character perfect for summer cocktails or easy sipping with friends on the patio. The rich, mellow *Apple Brandy* brings warm orchard flavor with a hint of nostalgia, while the refined *Grape Brandy* carries the deep fruit character and craftsmanship that wine lovers appreciate. Whether you're a long-time visitor or making your first trip to the winery, there's never been a better time to stop in, sample something new, and enjoy the beauty of the season at Whiskey Run Creek Winery.



Old Well in the garden at Whiskey Run Creek Winery & Distillery

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## Carriage House

Chris Kennedy

On a cool crisp April Saturday morning, the Brownville Historical Society sponsored an open house for the opening of its newest museum, the Carson House's, Carriage House. The Carriage House, which stands as a unique early 1860's edifice, is set on the Brownville property of the Carson House that was bequeathed by early Nebraska banker, John Carson's daughter Rose to the Brownville Historical Society in 1966. The Carriage House has experienced many tenants throughout the years, so with the historical society expansion of displays, many hands have developed this two-story structure that once housed working horses, horse drawn carriages, tack and staff quarters into a place to continue showcasing the early Nebraska territorial transportation life among other historical life in Brownville at the time. Current displays featured are a variety of carriages, Brownville Church displays and much more.

If you wish to expand your knowledge of historical Brownville or for a place to spend your weekend, please consider Brownville, a village on the National Register of Historic Places, and make this your next stop on your list of places to experience in Southeast Nebraska.

Current Brownville Historical Society Members include Chris Kennedy, President, Dr. David Kaufman, Vice President, Colleen Nieland, Secretary, Elaine Knapp, Treasurer, Tammy Shires, Gary Massa, Marty Peregoy, Ron Heskett, Elijah Kaufman, Emma Nieland, Kathi Niels and Sue Kunert. Serving as trustees are Melva Sage, Gregg Smith and Kellie Kennedy.

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## Slim's Stories

Submitted by Cheri & Nick Petrillo

One Sunday evening, when he was around eight years old, his sister Pearl was waiting to be picked up by her beau. He was to take her south of Auburn where she was teaching school. By the time he arrived it was getting dark. He had to open up the headlights on his car and light the carbide headlights with a match. This must have been an older model car (pre-1914 perhaps), because most cars by 1915 had electric lights. How far we've progressed.

Dad remembered his many Nincehelser uncles coming to visit his parent's house when they came to town. His parents had built their house in 1916 and had electricity. The uncles were fascinated by the three way switch in the living room. One uncle stood by the switch at the front door and flicked it on. Another stood at the switch on the other side of the room and flicked it off. They would repeat this exercise for quite a while.

A big topic of discussion for them was the roads. The streets in town were all dirt. Even the two highways through Auburn were dirt. One of his uncles would predict that "Some-day they'll have a rock road all the way from Omaha to Kansas City."

The others would shake their heads and say "No way." Maybe it'll be rocked through each town along the way, but it'll never be all rocked. They could never have imagined the vast interstate system we enjoy today.

I did a little research and found that highway 75 wasn't even designated as a highway until 1926. It was mostly dirt and gravel clear into the 30's, when paving began. It wasn't completed until the 1950's.

## WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN VISITS PERU

John C. Chatelain, Omaha

One of the most notable personalities to have visited Peru Normal was William Jennings Bryan who spoke at Chapel exercises on November 5, 1905 and returned to deliver the Commencement Address on May 23, 1907. <sup>1</sup> The lawyer/politician, often called "The Great Commoner" or "The Boy Orator" was born and reared in Salem, Illinois. He received his law degree from Chicago's Union Law College (n/k/a Northwestern University School of Law) <sup>2</sup> before moving to Lincoln, in the fast growing state of Nebraska to establish a law practice. <sup>3</sup>

The Great Commoner became a dominant force in the Democratic party, running three times unsuccessfully as his party's nominee for President of the United States in 1896, 1900 and 1908. Bryan served as Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of State until June 8, 1915. In the Boy Orator's final shot at the limelight, he squared off against the legendary Clarence Darrow in the Scopes trial in July of 1925. Darwin's Theory of Evolution was on trial.

The depression of 1893 caused populists, such as Bryan, to rise in stature. In 1894, he embarked on a nationwide speaking tour, earning sufficient fees to allow him to give up his law practice. <sup>4</sup> Bryan belonged to the wing of the Democratic party, which drew its members from the agrarian movements of the South and West, favoring greater federal intervention on behalf of farmers, together with the regulation of railroads and large corporations. <sup>5</sup> An alternative currency was believed to be the solution. Bryan's advocacy for the coinage of silver was opposed by the banks and bondholders who feared inflation. <sup>6</sup>

Free silver forces had ascended to power in the Democratic Party by 1896. Bryan rocketed to the national stage at the convention in Chicago, with "The Cross of Gold Speech", which was one for the ages. "If they dare to come out in the open field and defend the gold standard as a good thing, we shall fight them to the uttermost, having behind us the producing masses of the nation and the world. Having behind us the commercial interests and the laboring interests and all the toiling masses, we shall answer their demands for a gold standard by saying to them, you shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold."

Imagine the Golden Age of Peru State College when such renowned celebrities were featured. Bryan's oratory drew a crowd of 1,600 for the Chapel event, which was believed to be the biggest assembly room owned by the state. "I can leave no better thought with you this afternoon than that truth, no matter how long kept down, will triumph in the end," he told students in the audience. He encouraged them to go forward with the resolve to do good for mankind and to be a help, rather than a drag on society. <sup>7</sup>

More than likely, my grandparents attended those enthralling Bryan speeches. Grandpa (J. C. Chatelain) was a staunch Bryan supporter, possibly causing some stormy conversations with my Republican grandmother, Lottie. Dad was born on election day, November 3rd, 1908, when Bryan lost his last bid for the presidency to William Howard Taft. Apparently, Grandpa exerted some authority as the baby came into the world, tagged with a unique middle name, Ralph "Jennings" Chatelain. Dad recalled occasions from his early childhood, encountering the venerable Civil War Colonel, community leader and Republican politician, T. J. Majors, who warmly greeted him, "Hello little Taft."

<sup>1</sup> The Normal on the Hill, by Ernest Longfellow, p: 31; <sup>2</sup> William Jennings Bryan, Vol.1: Political Evangelist, 1860-1901, Paolo E. Colletta (1964), p. 46; <sup>3</sup> The Life of William Jennings Bryan, Michael Kazin (2006), pp. 17-19; <sup>4</sup> Kazin (2006) pp. 46-48; <sup>5</sup> Kazin (2006) pp. 20-22; <sup>6</sup> The Peerless Leader, William Jennings Bryan, Paxton H. Hibben (1929) p. 175; <sup>7</sup> Nebraska's First College: Shaping The Future Since 1867, p 50.

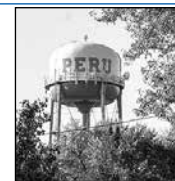
# PERU CITY NEWS

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## Tuesday Literary Club Reads

DiAnna Loy, Tuesday Literary Club

Carrying on with Tuesday Literary Club's theme of Celebrating the United States of America's 250th Birthday, Alice Holtz chose to present *Sharpie: The Story of Evelyn Sharp, Nebraska's Aviatrix* by Diane Ruth Armour Bartels. Bartels applied for and received the National Endowment for the Humanities/Reader's Digest Teacher-Scholar Award. The stipend assisted her with time and money to write to this biography.

Evelyn Sharp "Sharpie" was born in 1919 in Montana. She was adopted at two years of age by Jack and Mary Sharp. Jack was something of an entrepreneur, moving his family frequently trying many financial ventures, finally landing in Ord, Nebraska. Sharpie was only three years old when she saw a biplane and said, "I'm going to drive" an airplane. In 1935 Jack Jeffers, a room and boarder at Sharpie's dad's café and boarding house was behind on his bill. He offered John Sharps flight lessons for his daughter in return for his past due room and board bill. On February 4, 1935 Sharpie had her first flying lesson; it was two weeks before she flew again. She seemed to take to flying naturally. The people of Ord were intrigued with Sharpie's flying ability and banded together to put together a down payment on a brand-new Taylor cub airplane for her. She promised to repay then through brainstorming tours. Sharpie soloed at 16 and by age 17 earned her private pilot's license and her commercial transport license at 18. She was often the youngest women to reach many milestones. During 1938 and 1939, Sharpie made barnstorming tours around the country, giving over 5000 people sky rides. Her aerial antics caught the attention of admirers who read about her in newspapers, and she received letters from fans around the country.

By age 20, Sharpie was 1 of only 10 women flight instructors in the U.S. She had attended Flight School in Lincoln, Nebraska where she finished her instructors' rating. She taught flying lessons to over 350 men in the Government's Pre-WWII Civilian Pilot Training Program in South Dakota and California. At this time, she was the sole support for her parents as they moved to various locations in the U.S.

When the War Department organized the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron in 1942, Sharpie qualified as its 17th member. She came to the Ferry Command with more hours than any other pilot. Freeing male pilots for combat, Sharpie flew nearly every airplane in the Army Air Force's inventory. She was one of the original Women's Auxiliary Ferrying pilots with over 3,000 flying hours logged when she joined. On April 3, 1944, in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, Evelyn Sharp was ferrying a Lockheed P-38 when it lost an engine on takeoff. Evelyn did everything within her power to land the plane in an empty field instead of over a section of developed land. She accomplished that feat but was unable to eject from her plane because of a faulty escape system, pinning her in the plane. She died in that crash. Evelyn was 24 years old.

Evelyn accomplished so much in the nine years since she had taken her first flight near Ord, Nebraska. In that short time, she left many memories with all who knew her. Evelyn has been called Nebraska's most famous aviatrix. A P-38 propeller sits at the entrance of the Ord Airport, pictures and print media line the walls of the Ord operations building, and a Nebraska State Historical Highway Marker is posted at the entrance to Sharp Field.

This book was easy to read, and it was interesting reading about a great woman in Nebraska's history. The book *Sharpie* is available at the Auburn Memorial Library.

"Happy reading!"

## Haunted?

### When the Dog Grows at Nothing

by a wandering neighbor

Most folks who live long enough with animals eventually collect at least one story they cannot fully explain.

A dog staring into an empty hallway long after midnight.

A barn cat refusing to enter one particular room. Horses growing restless moments before a storm—or before a visitor arrives unexpectedly down the lane. Animals notice things. Farmers have said so for generations.

But some stories drift beyond weather and ordinary instinct.

Out near Humboldt years ago, a widow named claimed her old collie would rise every evening at precisely the same time, walk to the front door, wag his tail gently, and wait. This began only after her husband passed away. The dog had never done it before. For nearly three months it continued, always at dusk, always calm, as though expecting someone familiar to step through the door.

Then one evening it stopped.

Just stopped.

The dog never returned to the doorway again.

Down near Table Rock, another story still circulates about a barn cat named Oliver who refused to sleep anywhere except the upstairs bedroom of a farmhouse no one used anymore. According to the family, visitors occasionally heard footsteps overhead at night despite no one being there. Yet the cat remained perfectly content in that room, curled near the far corner beside an old rocking chair.

"Either the cat saw something," the farmer once joked, "or he was keeping something company."

Dogs, especially, seem to occupy a curious place in such stories. People speak of them growling at empty porches, barking toward dark fields where nothing can be seen, or suddenly watching a corner of the room with complete concentration before quietly relaxing again.

Skeptics, of course, have their explanations. Animals hear things we miss. Smell things we cannot detect. Sense vibrations, distant engines, changes in air pressure. Most strange behavior likely belongs to the ordinary world, even when we fail to understand it immediately.

Still... not every story fades so easily.

One Nemaha County man swore his Labrador continued scratching at the bedroom door each morning for weeks after the family's elderly cat had died. The scratching came at exactly the same hour the cat once expected breakfast. Eventually the dog stopped, but the man admitted the habit unsettled him enough that he began leaving the hallway light on before bed.

Not because he believed in ghosts, he insisted.

Just because the house felt better that way.

Perhaps that is why "pet paranormal" stories endure. They arrive without drama or grand claims. No rattling chains.

No thunderclaps. Just small moments that leave people pausing in quiet rooms, wondering whether animals notice something standing just beyond our understanding.

Or perhaps they simply remember what we have forgotten to pay attention to.

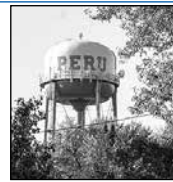
Either way, if your dog suddenly stares down the hallway tonight, you may find yourself looking twice as well.

# PERU CITY NEWS

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## Crazy Beth

Sylvie Shires

As she grew up in Richmond among the wealthy society of Virginia's capital, Elizabeth van Lew had little inkling she would become a key figure in the Civil War and would well deserve to be remembered as one of the heroines of our Country.

Her parents had come from the north, --New York and Philadelphia--, long before the Civil War. John van Lew was the prosperous owner of the hardware business he had founded. However, like the rest of Richmond's elite society, he had slaves.

The van Lews' mansion stood prominently on a hill across from St John Church, where Patrick Henry delivered his famous speech, "Give me liberty or give me death!" in 1775. They hosted balls and parties and entertained some famous guests, like Edgar Poe.

For the United States, which counted 36 states by then, it was the "Era of Good Feeling" marked with the enthusiasm of the Westward Expansion and progress. Richmond was prosperous, growing in population and industry; alas, it was also the second largest slave trade center in the country (second only to New Orleans). Although John van Lew was not a cruel man, he employed 15 slaves, either in his home or his business.

Early on Elizabeth balked at this: "From the time I knew right from wrong, it was my sad privilege to differ in many things from the opinions and principles of my locality." She viewed slavery as a blot on the nation: "Slave power is arrogant, is jealous and intrusive, is cruel, is despotic, not only over the slave, but over the community, the state." She was first educated at home, but was sent for a more complete education to a Quaker school in Pennsylvania. She returned home even more ardently anti-slavery than ever. Although her young brother, John Nelson, and her mother shared her views, still her father could not be convinced to manumit (free each of his slaves). Things changed drastically in 1843, when John van Lew passed away. Elizabeth was 25; John Newton van Lew (nine years her junior) inherited the business. With his mother and sister, he wasted no time in freeing the family slaves. Elizabeth and her brother went a step further, they bought some of their neighbors' slaves to free them, and even went to slave markets to buy families of slaves to prevent them from being separated. Many of these former slaves remained with the van Lew family as paid servants.

Elizabeth recognized the great aptitude and eagerness to learn in one of them, Mary Bowser, after Elizabeth taught her to read (which was illegal in the south). She sent Mary to be educated in Philadelphia. Mary then went to Liberia to join a missionary community and returned to Richmond just before the start of the Civil War.

John Newton van Lew's pro-Union views created a rift with his wife, who supported the Confederacy. She distanced herself from her family, and John's two daughters came to live at the mansion. John was forced to join the Confederate Army, but managed to desert and spent the remainder of the war in Philadelphia.

Elizabeth remained in the family home in Richmond with her mother. But far from staying quiet, she proclaimed her loyalty to the Union from the onset of the war. Although they found her position odd and irritating, her neighbors saw it, at first, as excentric nonsense and blamed largely Elizabeth's northern education for it. Elizabeth would later exploit this view of her as "not all there" to great advantage.

She entered into action when a large number of Union prisoners were brought to Libby Prison, which would be known as the "black hole of the rebellion." It was a tobacco warehouse turned into a jail where the prisoners suffered from hunger, disease, and despair. Elizabeth volunteered as a nurse, but her offer to make the prisoners' life more bearable was rejected by the prison overseer, Lt. David Todd (half-brother of Mary Lincoln, the Union President's wife!). Undeterred, she went over his head and convinced his superior officer to let her take food, books, and medicine to the prisoners as a measure of basic Christian charity. This, of course, drew heavy criticism from the Richmond residents. "These two women have been expanding their opulent means in aiding and giving comfort to the miscreants who have invaded our sacred soil." read the Richmond Enquirer.

Despite the risks, Elizabeth continued her mission of mercy, which soon turned into something even more dangerous. Being in the Confederate capital, she heard many things of import that she endeavored to relay to the Union forces. At the very beginning, she sent letters directly to President Lincoln, but she soon devised various ways to pass information to prisoners: messages hidden in emptied egg shells in a basket of eggs, or inside a jar of jam, or sewn inside the hem of a blanket, or hidden in books, soles of shoes, not to mention Elizabeth's dress which had many secret pockets. She developed her own coded language. She kept a copy of it, which was found folded tightly in the

back compartment of her watch when she died many years later.

She gathered and headed an entire spy network, men, women, of mixed colors and social classes, which by 1864 numbered more than a dozen people. Her code name was "Babcock." She managed to have Mary Bowser working as a maid in the house of Jefferson Davis, the Confederate president! Since many Blacks were considered by their masters as possessing limited intelligence and were deliberately deprived of education, no one suspected Mary of not only being able to read and write, but of having excellent memory.

Her reports to Elizabeth, passed in the dead of night, outside of the city and its populated surroundings, proved invaluable to the Union Army.

Elizabeth also facilitated the escape of several prisoners and even hid some of them temporarily in her attic. When horses were requisitioned by the Confederate Army, she could ill afford doing without hers for her nocturnal trips, so she hid it in her house.

In a failed attack by Union troops to free prisoners, young Colonel Dahlgreen was killed (he was 21). The Confederates suspected him of having been sent to kill Jefferson Davis, so they exposed his body publicly before burying it secretly. Elizabeth was horrified at such behavior and having found, through her network, where the body had been buried, she had it exhumed, transferred into a metal box and transported, through the different relays of her network, to the Union lines.

Meanwhile hostility and even suspicion were growing around Elizabeth, and she had a few near-disaster episodes. She managed, however, to deflect detection by acting weird, talking to herself in the streets, her head tilted to one side, dressed in old clothes. And people saw exactly what she wanted them to see: an aging woman, a bit deranged, therefore presenting little threat to the cause of the Confederacy. To them, she was just "Crazy Beth."

When Grant's army approached Richmond, Elizabeth raised the Union flag at the top of her mansion. An angry mob threatened to burn her home, but she shot back that if that happened, she would make sure that the Union army about to enter the city would make quick work of doing the same to their own homes.

Indeed, when Grant arrived in Richmond, he had tea with Elizabeth and thanked her for her invaluable contribution. Once elected President, he appointed Elizabeth as postmistress of Richmond, "in grateful recognition of her patriotism and her untiring devotion through all the turmoil and danger of the war." During her tenure, she helped modernize the city postal system and employed several black people. She also sponsored a library for them.

Meanwhile, the Richmonders considered her a traitor, to which Elizabeth commented she could not fathom how they could do so since she had been "serving her own country within its recognized borders." She did ask the president to send her back all the dispatches she had provided during the war and destroyed them, so there would be no chance of retaliation toward any member of her network.

When Rutherford Hayes succeeded Grant to the U.S. Presidency, Elizabeth's contract as postmistress was not renewed. With her own fortune gone, she found herself in dire straits, but when she appealed for help to the soldiers she had helped, they and their families did not let her down.

Elizabeth had given her all for the cause she knew was just. One may wonder why she remained in Richmond, surrounded by such hostility by most everyone, especially when she had so many friends in the north, who would have helped her rebuild her life there. But had she left, would that not have been an admission of sorts that she did not belong, that she was a "northerner" when all she did was because she was an American citizen first and foremost, dedicated to the preservation of her country?

When she died in 1900, the family of Colonel Paul Revere (descendant of the famous Paul Revere of the American Revolution) and other former prisoners she had helped provided her tombstone, a boulder from Capitol Hill in Boston, tribute from her Massachusetts friends, engraved with the words:

She risked everything dear to man --friends, fortune, comfort, health, life itself--that slavery might be abolished and the Union preserved.

Today, few people have even heard of Elizabeth van Lew. After her death, her house was razed and a school built in its place, probably another illustration of the long-lasting Confederate resentment toward her.

No matter, President Grant honored her as one of his most helpful spymasters and she remains, for those who learn about her, an inspiration of courage, resourcefulness, and selfless dedication to our great United States.



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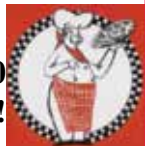


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# BROWNVILLE FINE ARTS ASSOCIATION

## 2026 Speaker Series & Art Exhibition

### Speaker Series Schedule

**Saturday, June 20 • 10:00 a.m.**  
**"LAKOTA CULTURE & CARE OF MOTHER EARTH"**  
by Mary M. Hines

This presentation explores why more understanding of Lakota culture and spiritual beliefs might help us all open ourselves to new thinking about how to become better stewards of our beautiful planet Earth. (Humanities Nebraska)

**Saturday, July 18 • 10:00 a.m.**  
**"GEORGE CUSTER & THE GREAT PLAINS"**  
by Jeff Barnes

Using Custer's trail as his route, Barnes has collected the imagery and the stories to show how the energy, danger, and beauty of the Plains may have influenced Custer and helped shape his complex legacy. (Humanities Nebraska)

**Saturday, August 8 • 10:00 a.m.**  
**"LIFE & DRIVE OF MARI SANDOZ"**  
by Peg Gilbert

A first person program about Mari's life from infancy and the experiences that shaped her life into a nationally known author. (Humanities Nebraska)

**Saturday, September 12 • 10:00 a.m.**  
**"INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE WOMAN FARMER"**  
by Kelli Kennedy

Kelli's program will focus on women farmers who have made significant impacts in sustainable agricultural history. Through perseverance and contributions, they have made a difference in their communities and in our world in the agriculture industry

**Saturday, October 10 • 1:00 p.m.**  
**"A YOUNG GENERAL & THE FALL OF RICHMOND:  
THE LIFE & CAREER OF GODFREY WEITZEL"**  
by G. William Quatman

Bill Quatman, a member of the Civil War Round Table of Kansas City, will discuss his book, "A Young General and the Fall of Richmond," that profiles the 29-year-old Union general who captured Richmond.

**Sunday, October 11 • 12:00 noon**  
**"THUNDER ON BAYS MOUNTAIN"**  
by Dale Gilbert

Dale Gilbert, author of "Thunder on Bays Mountain," will present the stirring real-life tale of Reverend Green Berry Gilbert, a man who lived through the Civil War, raised a family, and founded a church under the guidance of God on Bays Mountain.



Follow us on Facebook: Brownville Fine Arts Association

## Art Exhibition Schedule

### Schoolhouse Art Gallery

427 Main Street • Brownville, Nebraska

Art exhibits open Thursday, Friday, & Sunday, 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m.,  
and Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

If you would like to see the show at other times, please contact 402-414-2082.

**June 5 to June 28**  
**"A NATION UNASSAILABLE"**

by Tokeya Waci U (Comes Dancing First)  
Artist Reception: Friday, June 5, 6:00 p.m.

Best described as "a modern look into what has always been." Tokeya's work reflects a "modern style of Native American Ledger art" and traditionally uses its main purpose of having a visual reference to reflect the teachings that one would hear from their elders.



**July 2 to July 26**

**"3-D FROM A TREE" by Randy Perry**

Artist Reception: Friday, July 10, 6:00 p.m.

Randy Perry, artist and craftsman, creates artful, dimensional unique cutting boards, bowls, rolling pins, and more. His designs are drafted and built through a meticulous process of woodworking.



**July 30 to August 30**  
**"PRAIRIE ECHOS"**

by Kēvin Callahan and Marti Dodge

Artist Reception:

Friday, July 31, 6:00 p.m.

Prairie Echoes brings together two artists whose practices are grounded in close attention to land, material, and the act of making by hand. Through painting, wood, and metal, their work draws from the rhythms and memories of the prairie as a living presence.



**Saturday, August 15 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**  
**BROWNVILLE MAIN STREET ART & OPEN STUDIO**

**September 3 to September 20**  
**"DEENA SCHULTZ"**

Artist Reception: Friday, September 4, 6:00 p.m.

Deena has been an artist as far back as she can remember - creating as a small child, taking art classes in high school, then attending the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, and earning her degree in Fine Arts with an emphasis in paintings.



**October 1 to October 25**  
**"BEYOND THE STUDIO"**

by Area Plein Air Artists

Artist Reception: Friday, October 2, 6:00 p.m.  
(Debra Joy Groesser)



The collection and show will encompass a wide variety of artists' current works. Plein Air, a French expression, refers to nature painting outdoors.

**Saturday, October 3 • 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**  
**Plein Air Paint-Out**

**Saturday, December 5, 2026**

Brownville Tour of Homes: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Rohman Garden

Tree Lighting & Christmas Carols: 5:30 p.m.



## A Prairie Love--Chapter 15

The Evening Before – October 1924

The sun dipped low on the eve of the wedding, painting the prairie in honeyed gold. The cabin was swept and scrubbed, the porch freshly painted, and inside, the new curtains Cora had sewn fluttered at the windows. Hollyhocks stood in bloom like watchful sentries, their pink and crimson heads nodding in the breeze.

Cora sat on the edge of her childhood bed, the room around her touched with shadows of the past. Her wedding dress hung on the door, simple and white, with a sash the color of summer wheat.

Her mother entered quietly, holding a small velvet pouch. "I've been saving this," she said, voice gentle. "It was your grandmother's."

Cora opened the pouch to find a delicate cameo brooch—ivory against onyx, framed in gold. "Something old," her mother whispered, fastening it into Cora's dress. "To carry her with you."

Cora swallowed the lump in her throat. "Thank you, Mama."

At the edge of the pasture, Lyle leaned against the fence, a bucket of tools at his feet. Across from him stood his old friend, Henry Foster, who had driven over from the next township after hearing the news. "So you're really doing it," Henry said with a half-grin. "The bachelor's torch is officially passed."

Lyle chuckled. "Wasn't much of a torch. Just quiet dinners and long days in the field."

"And now it'll be diapers and milk cows," Henry teased. Then his tone softened. "She's a good one, Lyle. She's got grit, and she makes you better. That's the kind of woman you hold on to."

"I plan to," Lyle said. "I already feel like I've grown ten years in one."

They watched the windmill spin slowly in the distance, the day cooling into dusk. Henry reached into his coat pocket and pulled out a thin booklet. "Picked this up in town. Sears fall catalog just came in. They've got everything from wood-burning stoves to wedding rings. Even a 'modern' icebox you can order by post."

Lyle flipped through it, amused. "A phonograph for thirty dollars," he read aloud. "That's more than a cow."

"Yeah, but it sings better," Henry said.

They stood a moment longer, listening to the wind rustling through the stubbled fields. The wheat had been good this year, cattle prices up. Folks in town were optimistic—barn dances were crowded, the bank extended loans with smiles, and a few farmers even talked about buying automobiles come spring. Still, Lyle felt the weight of tomorrow—more than ceremony, it was a crossing into something deeper. Land to steward, children perhaps, a future to build in years both bright and uncertain.

As the light faded, Henry clapped a hand on his shoulder. "You've got this, my friend. Just remember, love's not in the grand gestures—it's in showing up every day."

Lyle nodded, his heart steady. "That's the plan."

Back in her room, Cora lay down one last time beneath her childhood quilt. She traced the brooch with her fingers, the echo of generations resting over her heart. Outside, a windmill turned, sure and slow, beneath a sky full of stars. Tomorrow would come. But tonight, everything felt just right.

*Continued in July*

12 June 2026 Your Country Neighbor

## Letters from the Prairie

October 23, 1888 Nemaha County, Nebraska

Letter from Anna Wilhelmine Bauer

to her sister Klara in Germany

My dearest Klara,

The harvest is nearly behind us now.

For weeks the fields have been alive with wagons, voices, and the steady creak of work being done before the weather changes its mind. At times it seemed the whole countryside moved in rhythm together—teams pulling loads toward town, men calling across the rows, women carrying dinners out wrapped in cloth to keep them warm.

Now, at last, the fields are mostly bare.

Only the corn shocks remain standing here and there like quiet sentinels across the land. The earth itself looks tired to me, though perhaps I only imagine it because we are tired too. Johann says it was a fair harvest. Not perfect, but honest. Around here, that is often enough.

The trees along the creek have turned. Some mornings they glow gold in the early light, so bright they scarcely seem real. By afternoon the wind strips a few more leaves away, and they go tumbling across the yard like frightened birds. Lena gathers the prettiest ones and presses them inside her Bible, though she says she does not wish winter to come.

I understand her feeling.

The evenings arrive earlier now. Supper is finished before full darkness settles, and afterward we sit close to the stove while Johann reads the newspaper aloud when there is enough lamp oil to spare. The boys grow restless indoors already. They tramp in and out carrying wood, always hungry, always certain there is something more to eat hidden somewhere in the kitchen.

Last Sunday after church there was talk of the coming winter. Old Mr. Eckert says he has seen muskrats building their houses unusually thick along the creek banks, which according to him means hard snow before Christmas. Others say the geese have been flying lower than usual. Everyone has signs to offer this time of year. Whether any of them mean anything, I cannot say.

Still, I catch myself studying the sky more often.

There are moments now when the prairie feels very large again, as it did when we first arrived. Summer softens things. People leave doors open. Neighbors travel the roads more freely. But autumn reminds you how quickly distance returns once cold weather settles in.

And yet there is comfort too.

Yesterday I baked bread while Lena shelled beans at the table beside me, humming to herself all the while. The windows fogged from the heat of the stove, and for a little while the whole house smelled of yeast and cinnamon and wood smoke. Outside, the wind bent the tall grass nearly flat, but inside everything felt warm and held together.

Perhaps that is what home truly is, Klara. Not the place itself, but the feeling that light still waits for you at the window when the world grows dark early. I think often of you now as the seasons turn once more. If the first snow has already touched your village, I hope you are keeping warm and wearing the blue shawl Mother made before we left girlhood behind us.

Write when you can. Your letters travel many miles, but they always seem to arrive precisely when I need them most.

With enduring love,

Anna

*Continued in July*

## Westward With Lewis & Clark

Chapter 12, Part 1 *The Prairie Fire* Late August, 1804

The wind changed sometime during the night. I noticed it before dawn while standing watch along the edge of camp. Until then it had moved steadily from the west, dry and persistent. Now it came in uneasy intervals, turning upon itself without settling. The river reflected almost nothing of the sky above it. Even the surface appeared uncertain. The men rose slowly. Several complained of the smoke before any of us could yet see its source. At first I believed it no more than the lingering scent of last evening's fire carried low through camp. But as morning strengthened, the smell deepened. Not wood alone.

Grass.

By full light a faint haze had gathered along the southern horizon. It rested low against the earth, scarcely distinguishable from distance itself. One of the Frenchmen muttered something under his breath and pointed with his chin.

Drouillard studied it for some time before speaking. "Prairie fire," he said simply.

No alarm followed his words, though the camp quieted. Fires upon the plains were not unknown to several of the men, but few among us had seen one close at hand. Lewis asked several questions at once—how quickly such fires moved, whether the buffalo fled before them, whether the river itself would stop their advance.

Drouillard answered carefully.

"Depends on the wind," he said.

By midmorning the haze had risen noticeably. What earlier resembled distant fog now revealed motion within it. A broad stain spread slowly across the horizon, dark beneath and pale above where smoke met sunlight. The smell strengthened until it settled into our clothing and hair.

Still we moved upriver.

The channels remained troublesome. More than once the boats grounded against hidden bars, forcing the men again into the water. Yet even while laboring against the current, eyes drifted southward. The buffalo had already begun to move.

Long lines of them crossed the distant prairie at angles difficult to follow, their dark shapes threading silently through the grass. Some traveled steadily northward. Others gathered in restless clusters before turning again. Antelope appeared as well, swift and uncertain, vanishing almost as quickly as they emerged.

No gunshots sounded that day.

Even the hunters seemed unwilling to disturb the strange order settling over the land.

Near midday we climbed a low rise overlooking the river valley, and there at last we saw the fire itself. It stretched for miles.

A thin, wavering line at first glance, no higher than brush against the horizon. Yet behind it rose immense folds of smoke, darkening the sky in layered columns. Along portions of the line the flames lifted suddenly, driven upward by wind into brief towers of orange before falling again into the grass.

The prairie did not burn evenly. Some stretches advanced slowly, creeping low across the ground. Elsewhere the fire leapt forward in violent bursts, consuming entire sections at once. The sound reached us only faintly at that distance—a dull rushing, like heavy rain moving through timber far away. Clark stood silent beside Lewis for some time.

"It travels faster than a horse in good wind," one of the engagés remarked quietly.

*Continued in July*

# A Woman, a Farm, and the Dry Years

The Face Of Drought (circa 2005), by Karen Ott, a former contributor to “YCN”

The northern edge of the big storm which hit Colorado last weekend brushed the panhandle dropping a fair amount of snow to the south of us, up to an inch of rain east of us, three tenths here on the home place and nothing at Torrington less than 20 miles west. For the most part it missed our watersheds.

We have become so accustomed to storms going around us a Discovery Channel futuristic movie special depicting a Yellowstone Park volcanic eruption didn't worry us a bit... after all, if the weather pattern holds, the cloud of volcanic ash and smoke will divide just west of Wyoming's Pathfinder reservoir, leaving us as the only area in the United States free and clear of ash-fall.

It's been a typical Great Plains Spring, blue skies, temps all over the place, and wind...and more wind...and even more wind.

Eskimos have their dozen different words for snow but Nebraskans have fifty words for wind...none of them complimentary. I love Nebraska but hate the wind. Not only does it fill the yard with tumbleweeds, corn husks, and other assorted debris, it limits my outdoor decorating options. In most areas a scarecrow is stuffed with straw and ends up light as a feather; but not here. My across-the-road-scarecrow probably weighs 150 lbs. If I hadn't wired the bottom edges of his new jeans closed last week and filled the legs with rocks his pants would be in the next county by now. The dogs have learned to steer clear of him during windstorms; otherwise they'd be knocked senseless by a pair of legs heavy enough to be considered lethal weapons.

I briefly considered turning 'him' into a 'her' this year, but couldn't come up with of a surefire method of keeping her skirt down during our windy weather and discarded the idea in the name of modesty and good taste; he will remain a Mr.

I've been toying with the idea of hanging a sign around his neck with the words, 'Unemployed because of drought', scrawled across it in red paint. He stands next to a field, which, because of Mitchell Irrigation District's lack of storage water,

will remain corn stubble throughout the growing season; without water for the field there will be no water for the pumpkin patch. You know times are tough when even the scarecrows are out of work.

Like the scarecrow, we are holding up as well as can be expected. While it's difficult to look across acres of corn stubble still standing in mid-April, I can't imagine how it is going to feel to see the land ripe with drought and looking like winter during the verdant and summer-green days of July and August.

Because our fields are physical symbols of who we are and what it means to be a farmer the droughted-out acres will chafe and irritate all summer long.

But it's only the middle of April and corn hasn't yet crossed the men's minds, they are all-consumed with planting and spraying beets. The first two fields went in Saturday, shortly before the rain, the third was planted Wednesday and the final field will go in Sunday or Monday. Stringing out planting dates is an old ploy aimed at cheating Mother Nature out of the pleasure of freezing all the beets off during a single night's cold snap. Sometimes the strategy works and sometimes it doesn't; but we're farmers... trying to outmaneuver nature is in our job description.

In the long run, the years we spend attempting to bend weather to our own will rather than adapting to its various vagrancies, leaves us as tough and gnarled as a hundred-year-old cottonwood. Scarred by winter blizzards and summer thunderstorms, marked by flood and drought, we keep standing, roots sunk deep in the soil and heads held high in proud defiance.

We are heroes of our own story... braving the odds is what we do best.

Karen



# ARBOR CITY NEWS

## *Morton-James Public Library Calendar of Events June 2026*

All activities held at Morton-James Public Library (unless otherwise noted\*), 923 1st Corso, Nebraska City, NE 68410  
For questions call 402-873-5609 or visit [morton-jamespubliclibrary.com](http://morton-jamespubliclibrary.com)

### All Programming is Free and Open to the Public

#### Summer Reading Program Kickoff Party

**Monday, June 1 10:00AM - 11:30AM**

Unearth A Story Kickoff Party! We will have face painting and dinosaur activities, including a photo station with a guest dinosaur! No registration, free! Call us at the Library with any questions: 402-873-5609.

#### Lego Club Monday, June 1 3:30PM - 5:00PM

Join us at the Library in the Kimmel Gallery every first and third Monday of the month from 3:30 - 5:00 pm for Lego Club! Free build with Legos at the club or bring your own sets to work on. Ages 8 and older. No reservations, free to attend.

#### Mr. Oakley's "Unearth a Story Time"

**Wednesday, June 3 10:00AM - 10:30AM**

Story Times are geared for ages 6 and under. No registration. Families welcome! Stories, sign language, and coloring pages.

#### Yarn Crafters Club

**Wednesday, June 3 1:30PM - 3:00PM**

This is for all levels of crafters. Bring your own hooks, yarn, needles, whatever you need to make your yarn craft. Club members will be here to help those beginning. MJPL will have some patterns available. Free to attend. Everyone 15 and older is welcome!

#### \*Farmers Market 8th Street between 1st Corso and Central

**Thursday, June 4 4:30PM - 5:30PM**

The Library will have a table at the Nebraska City Farmers Market with free craft supplies and other giveaways.

#### HN Chris Sayre - British Isles and Irish Music Sampler

**Thursday, June 4 7:00PM - 8:00PM**

#### Papercraft Party

**Saturday, June 6 9:00AM - Noon**

Calling all scrapbookers, junk journalers, and collage makers! Bring your own project to work on. We provide paper/stickers/tape/markers/scissors. Any type of papercraft welcome! New members will receive a scrapbook to fill! Bring your own pictures! No registration.

#### \*Wildlife Encounters at NC Middle School

**Tuesday, June 9 10:00AM - 11:00AM**

Meet animal ambassadors from Wildlife Encounters and learn facts about these animals and how they live.

Free, no registration, all ages welcome.

#### Story Time with Keep Nebraska City Beautiful

**Wednesday, June 10 10:00AM - 10:30AM**

Story Times are geared for ages 6 and under. No registration. Families welcome!

#### Library Board Meeting

**Wednesday, June 10 4:00PM - 6:00PM**

#### Engaging Mature Minds Memory Jars

**Thursday, June 11 10:00AM - 11:30AM**

Join us to engage your mind by connecting with other seniors while acquiring wisdom through community. Different topics/speakers each class. Free to attend, no reservation needed. Optional free will donations to support the library accepted.

#### Adult Build-an-Animal Workshop

**Thursday, June 11 6:00PM - 7:00PM**

Adults 19 and older can register to make a snowy owl stuffed animal! Must reserve your spot by calling 402-873-5609!

#### Lego Club Monday, June 15 3:30PM - 5:00PM

Join us at the Library in the Kimmel Gallery every first and third Monday of the month from 3:30 - 5:00 pm for Lego Club! Free build with Legos at the club or bring your own sets to work on. Ages 8 and older. No reservations, free to attend.

**14 June 2026 Your Country Neighbor**

#### Afternoon Book Club

**Tuesday, June 16 2:00PM - 3:00PM**

**The Sideways Life of Denny Voss by Holly Kennedy**—Anyone can join and there is no registration. New members are always welcome! Book lists for the year are available at the Library.

#### Story Time with Sarah Strehle

**Wednesday, June 17 10:00AM - 10:30AM**

Story Times are geared for ages 6 and under. No registration. Families welcome!

#### Evening Book Club

**Wednesday, June 17 5:00PM - 6:30PM**

**Thursday Murder Club by Richard Osman**

Anyone can join and there is no registration. New members are always welcome! Book lists for the year are available at the Library.

#### \*Farmers Market 8th Street between 1st Corso and Central

**Thursday, June 18 4:30PM - 5:30PM**

The Library will have a table at the Nebraska City Farmers Market at 810 1st Corso with free craft supplies and other giveaways.

#### Jeff Quinn Magic

**Saturday, June 20 10:00AM - 11:00AM**

Join us for a fun (and funny) magic show from Jeff Quinn. All ages welcome!

#### Writers Workshop

**Saturday, June 20 10:00AM - 11:00AM**

Join us for a roundtable-style writers workshop! Share writing and give feedback to others. Zoom option available. Email [mjplibraryww@gmail.com](mailto:mjplibraryww@gmail.com) to have a Zoom link sent to you if you cannot attend in person. Bring a short piece of your writing to share! This program is for writers aged 18+

#### Science Heroes (Science + Storytelling)

**Monday, June 22 10:00AM - 11:00AM**

Science experiments come to life through story with Science Heroes. Open to youth of all ages and their caregivers. No registration.

#### Story Time with Kimmel Orchard

**Wednesday, June 24 10:00AM - 10:30AM**

Story Times are geared for ages 6 and under. No registration. Families welcome!

#### Engaging Mature Minds

**Thursday, June 25 10:00AM - 11:30AM**

Join us to engage your mind by connecting with other seniors while acquiring wisdom through community. Different topics/speakers each class. Free to attend, no reservation needed. Optional free will donations to support the library accepted.

#### Stomp, Chomp, Roar! Dinosaur Program

**Tuesday, June 30 10:00AM - 11:00AM**

Come learn about dinosaurs with Ranger Anthony at this program open to youth of all ages and their caregivers.

#### Chess Club--Every Thursday 4PM - 6PM

All ages and experience levels are welcome to join Chess Club on Thursdays. If you have never played, members will teach you! Chess boards provided.

#### Kimmel Gallery

Photography by Teresa Fields  
June 3 - 29, 2026  
Open during regular Library hours.

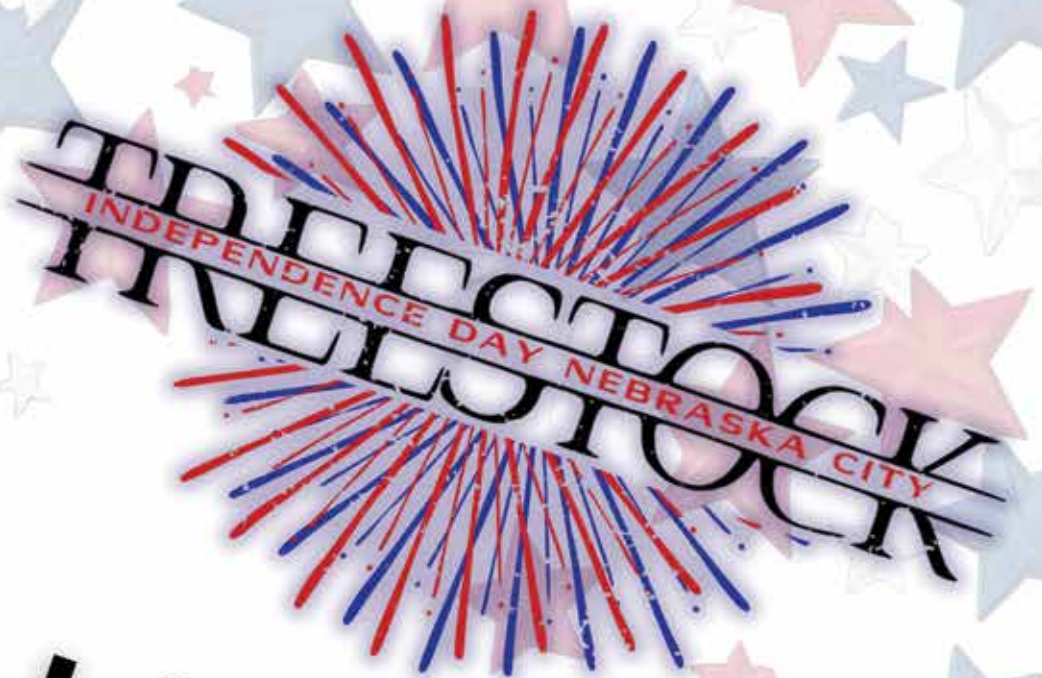
#### Library hours:

Monday-Thursday 9am-6pm; Friday 9am-5pm ; Saturday 9am-1pm

# ARBOR CITY NEWS

*News from Nebraska City*

- Foam Party
- Bounce Houses
- Mechanical Bull
- Putt Putt Golf
- Carnival Games
- Legion Baseball
- Food Trucks
- Golf Tournaments
- Steinhart Aquatic Center
- And SO MUCH MORE!



**July 4-5, 2026**



***Nebraska City has all the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fun!***



TOURISM & COMMERCE

*Visit [www.NebraskaCity.com](http://www.NebraskaCity.com) for a complete list of fun happenings this 4<sup>th</sup> of July!*

# ARBOR CITY NEWS

News from Nebraska City



## Singles In Agriculture

Remembering Rural Roots — and Making New Friends

The national organization of Singles In Agriculture is hosting their annual convention in Nebraska City, NE the weekend of **July 16-19, 2026**. It also marks the 40th Anniversary since the group was founded. Singles in Agriculture(SIA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated in providing social and educational opportunities to single persons with a background or interest in agriculture. Members and guests enjoy reasonably priced events across the United States.

We encourage singles to come and see what we are all about. We invite you to come for the meet and greet on Thursday. Or any part of the weekend. We would love to meet you. Thursday night, July 16th: Meet and Greet 7-9 pm at the Best Western, 2515 South 11th Street.

Some of the events planned for the weekend: Tour of the Kimmel Orchard and vineyard, a play at the Brownville Village Theatre, tour of the Southeast Nebraska Cancer Memorial Garden in Humboldt, NE and much more. For more information contact Cindy (308)920-0364 or Larry (712)269-3414 or visit the website: [singlesinagriculture.com](http://singlesinagriculture.com)



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## Midwest Observation

Bruce Madsen, Nebraska City

### 'Suits'

'Suits,' you just don't see them anymore  
Not like you used to in days of yore  
Special occasions called for special dress  
So men always wore suits, and not anything less

Band concerts, weddings, attending Sunday church  
Funerals, pageants and at meetings you can search  
But you're not going to see the style that use to be  
The manner of dress has changed, it's so much more leisurely

A white shirt and tie and maybe cufflinks too  
With a full cut suit, a man looks good all the way through  
But refrain from white socks, that doesn't work if you're a man of style  
It's like a black tuxedo with brown shoes, that look is just vile

I would think a woman would admire a man in 'formal dress'  
It shows confidence, security, stability, and projects an icon of success  
But somehow, to that image we do not commit  
And the definition of a well dressed man is now Wranglers or Levis

with a T-shirt that says 'screw it'

Most of us haven't fallen that far  
But the idea of dressing up to the 'inth' degree just doesn't register anymore  
My self included can be put on that list  
Although I do have a suit, it hangs in my closet slowly collecting dust

So the point of all this may be hard to see  
But I do know someone who has not succumbed to being leisurely  
His suits are pressed and his shirts are white  
He leaves a disciplined impression when you see him upon first sight

The Mayor of our little town is the one that jarred my thoughts  
His style made me think that all is not for naught  
So I wrote this little ditty  
To acknowledge the Mayor of Nebraska City

It would be nice if someday, we as men, could adopt the same style  
That would show pride and confidence as we pursue life's unknown miles  
Yes, I know it's a stretch from suits to the end of this poem  
But, it's my journey, and I've got something to think about when I get home

# Poetry

by Devon Adams, Nebraska City

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by  
Devon  
Adams,  
Nebraska  
City

## FATHERS

We all have one, or more than one if our families have a step or two, here and there, for whatever reasons.

Fathers shape our lives by their presence or absence, whether love or fear or hate was there. Children know only the family that they belong to, and accept it. Later, as adults, we notice that families are different and some are more loving or safer than others. But all children want to love Mom and Dad, and they will do that in their deepest heart no matter the truth of a bad situation or a good one. When time is gone and tomorrow won't happen, we take that longing with us as we cross the final edge.

## OPEN THE BOX

Tomorrow is a box sitting by your door, waiting for you to open it. Do you hesitate and grit your teeth, or tear it open with relief in your thoughts that it will be good? How did you feel when the child that you were faced each day? With fear in your heart, or with confidence that you could handle what came your way? We carry our past with us forever, as the shadow of our early selves follows us step for step, day for day. If we were afraid then, we are still afraid now without knowing it. But safety is as close as telling your shadow child that you are old enough and wise enough to protect them now, and that tomorrow will be a good day, because you will make it good.

## CIRCLE OF SEASONS

We live inside a giant clock that ticks and tocks with rocks that roll around the sun in the center. Our solstice is coming up to mark the date the shadows turn around and go back toward winter angles. Our time rolls with the rhythm of the stars, and then we pass beyond the bounds of earth and float forever in time as indomitable charges of the infinite energy that is life.

## FLUTTER BY

In an instant, you catch the flutter of wings at the edge of your vision. Some theories say that is where the angels are, out there on the rim of reality. Wait! There it is again. But now it is real. A fancy Tiger Swallowtail butterfly is riding on a current of air, like a fairy dancing in the sunshine and flowers. They are impossibly delicate and yet able to survive in spite of storms and hazards. Maybe they all have a little help from real angels flying right beside them!

## BRIDES' FATHERS

Men don't cry. Yes, they do. When the tiny three-year old comes dancing down the aisle beside her father in her wedding gown, he is gripped by emotion so deep that he can't breathe. He wants to pick her up and run back home where he can protect her forever. But that won't happen. Now she is standing by the man who will take her away and that is the way the day will go. Her father will love her even more than he thought was possible, until forever and beyond.

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## Window On Fifth Street

Stephen Hassler, Peru

Looking out my window on Fifth Street, I can see Summer from here, and I like it. I have a friend who tells me, “Summer is not everyone’s favorite season.” I suppose that’s true, especially for people who don’t enjoy the heat or tornados. But heat doesn’t bother me much, neither does humidity. I’m comfortable “living” outside, especially on my front porch on a warm evening.

When streaming Netflix and Hulu was new, I spent many Summer evenings on my porch with my laptop computer and a glass of iced tea, watching one television series after another. But my love of Summer began long ago.

As a boy, June’s arrival meant freedom.

The last day of school opened the door to weeks of playtime and discovery on the farm; catching toads after dark on humid evenings, fishing for sunfish and bullheads in a nearby branch of an unnamed stream, or lying flat on my back in the yard, staring up at more stars than seemed possible from one horizon clear to the other.

Sometimes there were Sunday picnics, but many days it was simply peanut butter sandwiches and Kool-Aid that my mother carried out to our “playhouse,” our secret hide-out in the tree-break.

But the best day of the year came on the Sunday after school let out, when our one room country school held its annual Summer picnic. Classmates, parents, relatives, and neighbors all gathered with covered dishes and homemade desserts spread across long tables. After the meal, the children could eat all the ice cream they wanted.

I remember having three or four cones myself; chocolate chip, strawberry, and vanilla.

There were softball games, potato sack races, three-legged races, and all the noise and laughter a child could hope for. But strangely enough, what I remember most clearly happened the day before.

That Saturday morning, I woke from a dream that it was the first day of school. For a few awful seconds, I thought Summer was over before it had even begun. Then came the wonderful realization: school was out, the picnic was tomorrow, and the whole Summer stretched ahead like an endless gift.

I can still remember that feeling of relief and happiness. Perhaps that’s why Summer still feels a little magical to me. Especially on warm evenings like this one, sitting quietly on the porch and feeling, if only for a moment, that there are still free and easy days ahead.

## Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson, Auburn

Baby bunnies are so cute. I’ve been watching two of them at my house for about three weeks now. They first appeared from under the purple winter creeper vine in the front yard, venturing out just far enough to nibble grass. I’m guessing their nest is under there, though I have not seen an adult rabbit anywhere nearby.

One bunny was definitely more adventurous than the other that first day. It came up on the patio and dashed back and forth along the edge of the house foundation, attempting to jump up onto various things. It was probably scared out of its wits, though Hubby and I found it very entertaining.

It didn’t take long for one or both of them to begin exploring farther afield. I rarely saw them both at the same time after the first week. I soon observed one or the other making regular forays into my flower bed along the driveway and into the “wildwood” on the other side of our lot.

Recently, I was looking out the kitchen window and saw one of them make a beeline from the winter creeper toward the front of the garage. The garage doors were open, but I couldn’t tell if the bunny had run inside. It wouldn’t do to accidentally run over it, so I made a quick recon of the garage, peering under the vehicles and behind various shelves and whatnot. No sign of the bunny, so I closed the doors and hoped it wasn’t trapped in there.

I knew, of course, that in a few weeks the bunnies would lose their charm. They’d eat something I didn’t want them to eat. Eventually, they would be fully grown and become a nuisance instead of a source of wonder and delight.

Well, that day came this morning. I spied that adorable little bunny munching on a stem of spiderwort, working its way up to the lovely purple blossom. This is simply not acceptable! What’s to be done then? I could try live trapping. Hubby did that once with a squirrel. He drove it out to the country and pulled off onto a side road near a small stand of trees. He opened the trap door, the squirrel tore out, immediately ran into the path of a car, and got run over. So, that was that.

Hubby says the only way to deal with rabbits is to shoot them. But the bunny is so cute! I can’t bring myself to kill it. I have a bunch of chicken wire just taking up space in the shed. I’ll put it to use and try to keep the rabbit away from the spiderwort. I hope I don’t end up with a Peter Rabbit situation. Untangling a squealing, squirming bunny from chicken wire sounds like a good way to get bitten.

Some problems just don’t have a good solution. Maybe that’s the purpose of rabbits: they remind us that life is full of dichotomies. If we want to enjoy watching cute baby bunnies in the wild, we have to accept that at some point they will annoy us, no matter how cute they are. Such is life.



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