

YOUR COUNTRY NEIGHBOR

River Towns & Prairie Communities March 2026



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The Snow Geese migration is one of my most anticipated events of the year.



More Action Photos Page 6

I’ve heard reports of Red-winged Blackbirds returning. But as of today, I have not seen one. No Turkey Vultures yet either, nor have I seen any crocus sprouts, although an invasive type of grass is sprouting in my backyard. But the Snow Geese are gathering in the 100s of thousands at the Refuge. They know Spring is coming soon. On this day I intend to photograph the event I believe is more grand than the world renown Sandhill Cranes. Look for my photos by turning these pages... if I’m there in time.



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Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

P.O. Box 124 Peru, Nebraska 68421

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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

March

by a country neighbor

If January clears the slate and February tests our resolve, March can break the pattern. It arrives restless, unable to decide what it wants to be. One morning brings temperatures mild enough to open windows; the next, snow blows sideways across fields that seemed ready to thaw. The wind picks up, insistent and unpredictable, shaking loose what's left of Winter while Spring tries to find its footing.

This is the month of false starts and real promises. The ground softens in patches. Creek beds that ran silent under ice begin to murmur again, their voices growing louder with each melt. The light changes too—not just longer now, but bolder, casting sharper shadows across the land. Trees remain bare, but their buds are set, waiting for the right conditions. Nothing rushes. Everything prepares.

The light continues its quiet advance. Mornings arrive earlier, evenings stretch a little longer, and the sun climbs just high enough to remind us what warmth feels like. Red-winged blackbirds return to the cattails, staking their claims with that unmistakable call. Robins appear on lawns, heads cocked, listening for movement beneath the soil. Along fence lines and ditches, the first green shows itself—tentative but determined, pushing through last year's stubble. It's a month that teaches us the difference between patience and readiness.

There's work to be done now, the kind that can't wait much longer. Equipment needs checking, fields need walking, plans need finalizing. But March also reminds us that some things can't be rushed. The ground will thaw on its own schedule. Seeds will germinate when conditions allow, not when calendars dictate. We prepare what we can and trust the rest to time and nature.

It's a month of contradictions—mud and sun, cold mornings and warm afternoons, lingering snow and emerging crocuses. March refuses to be pinned down, and maybe that's appropriate. After the stillness of January and the endurance of February, we need a month that stirs things up, that reminds us change doesn't arrive neatly or all at once. March feels like a larger opening—more than the door February offered. The year is no longer beginning; it's underway.

From my place between the river and the prairie, I hope that this month brings you resilience to weather's mood swings, the wisdom to prepare what you can, and the grace to let the rest unfold in its own time.



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Bald Eagle surveys its territory from the top of a cottonwood tree at the Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge.

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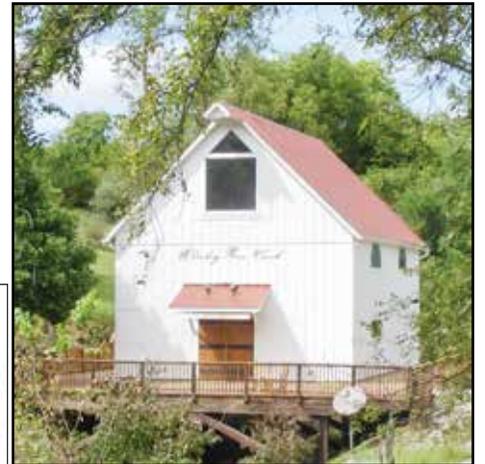
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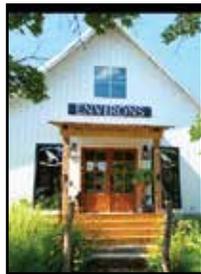
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America is 250 years old. A Salute to George Washington

Sylvie Shires, Peru

This year, our country is celebrating its 250th anniversary. By comparison to the rest of the world, it is a young country, and yet, one whose own success has benefitted the whole world.

I believe this uniqueness of America goes back to its origins: Predominantly Christian colonies growing into a new nation united by the conviction "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." In other words, whether Christian, Jew, or deist, America's Founders believed in a Providential God and therefore sought to consciously establish this new nation upon moral principles, which is truly admirable and unprecedented. Most other countries of the world, France included, more or less "happened to be," without a consensus of founders to intentionally define it. They are the result of wars and conquests, even if they are rich in great thinkers and heroes of their own. The American Revolution stands out as an extraordinary example of independence and rational thought. By contrast, the French Revolution rose in disorder, blossomed in hatred, and achieved the replacement of an absolute king by a republican age of terror, only to end up with Napoleon, 12 years of war, and nearly a million dead, soldiers or civilians, and that's just for France itself! As for the Russian and Chinese Revolutions, they were horrid episodes of History as well.

The American Revolution was truly unique in that it was both a well thought-out decision as we can see in the perfectly organized argument of the Declaration of Independence, but also an incredibly courageous step of faith. Consider these colonies of merchants and farmers, with now a makeshift army with no training, little ammunition, no proper supplies of clothing or food ready to face the most powerful, well-trained, well-equipped army of the world at the time! America's existence is truly a miracle because it defied all the odds.

But America is also a beautiful mosaic of heroes from all walks of life, some well-known, some not at all. So in honor of this celebratory 250th year, I would like to recognize a few of these heroes that made and continue to make America so extraordinary.

It seems logical to start with George Washington.

Of course, he is among our "known" heroes. Or is he?

Certainly, most of us have learned the main lines of his life: General of the American Army, First U.S. President, owner of Mount Vernon. But, there are many more details about this great man that are worthy of note. Few know that he was 6'3", was extremely athletic, a fantastic horseman, and a fine dancer. He was very close to his stepchildren and grandchildren. Most significantly, he also was a man of great faith. His personal religious convictions guided his integrity, his nearly flawless sense of duty, his leadership, his courage, his sacrifices, and his humility.

He was only 11 when his father died, leaving the family with insufficient funds for George to receive a classical education, like his older brothers. He felt himself considerably lacking, especially considering the fact that most of the Founding Fathers were highly educated. Thus, he compensated by learning as much as he could through books on various topics, including farming, military training, and leadership.

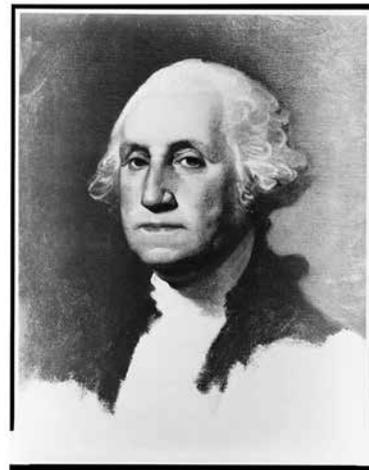
Washington was a wealthy and prudent landowner. He had inherited Mount Vernon from his brother Lawrence, and gained more wealth from his marriage with Martha (an admirable woman in her own right). He was content to live with his family, improving his estate, but was no less

ready to lose it all in the service of this nascent country that seemed fated to fail.

Once the Revolution triumphed, he almost reluctantly accepted to step in as America's First President. A great leader who did not crave power, honors, or fame, that, too, was a miracle. He set the example of stepping down gracefully at the end of two terms and returning home happily.

When George III heard of Washington's intention to retire, he exclaimed, "If he does that, he will be the greatest man in the world!" Washington can certainly be counted among the greatest men of history.

When the young French Marquis de La Fayette, unlike most aristocrats, came to offer his service to the American Revolution in 1777, Washington found the son he never had and La Fayette a true father instead of the one he never knew (he was only 2 when his own father died).



In 1789, when the French Revolution started, the fortress-prison La Bastille, symbol of oppression, was destroyed. La Fayette sent its key to Washington, as a mark of their shared vision of Liberty. At the time, La Fayette believed France would follow America's example in establishing a fair system of government. That key holds a place of honor at Mount Vernon today.

Not only did their bond of friendship last 22 years (until Washington's death), but when the French Revolution turned ugly, with La Fayette in a German prison

(which probably spared him from the guillotine), Adrienne, his wife feared for the safety of their only son, George Washington de La Fayette and managed to send him secretly to America, where he stayed for several years with George and Martha Washington. With the help of Madison and Jefferson, Washington wrote his Farewell Address. It was never spoken, but published in the American Daily Advertiser, in 1796. Although we can sense how tired he felt after 45 years of service to his country and years to go home, he wanted to leave the Nation he loved with humble yet powerful advice, such as:

Beware of factions that can tear the nation apart,
Changes to be made must obey the Constitution, without which the nation cannot survive,

American Independence is a new "experiment that will require patience, self-discipline, the creation of new habits, avoiding foreign influences and alliances, and a deep religious morality."

The text shows a man without arrogance or self-importance, aware of his human frailty and of mistakes, who hopes to be remembered for the good to which he contributed.

As often, the Past has so much to impart to the Present. Our 21st-century America has become a great world power since 1776, and the ragtag army of the Revolution has secured peace and freedom through two World Wars and more. Yet, as Washington's words remind us: Independence and Liberty require constant nurturing and vigilance if they are to be preserved.

Our first President leaves us, indeed, with great inspiration and gratitude.

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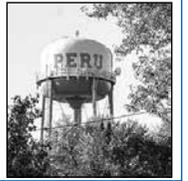
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A Window On Washington St.

Stephen Hassler, Peru

Through my front window, Washington Street looks settled this morning. The streetlight at the corner has gone dark, and the thin line it once cast across the pavement is gone as if it had never been there. A pickup slows for the stop sign, its engine louder as it accelerates away.

Across the way, a house has kept its decorative lights on long after the calendar said they should come down. Through December and January, the red and green glow felt cheerful. By February, the colors shifted. Hearts appeared on the bare rose bush. Later, shamrocks joined them, marking each month's holiday as though time itself were being marked quietly, one small adjustment at a time.

I've watched this long enough now that it feels less like decoration and more like neighborhood infrastructure. Not a statement. Not a performance. Just a way of keeping track. In a town where days often blur together, someone is paying attention to the fact that one season ends and another begins.

Years ago, I was watching a televised event with a group of people gathered in a field. The camera panned the sky slowly, methodically, searching. Everyone waited. Then, just for a moment, two parachutes drifted into view at the edge of the frame—large, unmistakable, carrying people safely downward. The camera panned right by them. No one reacted. The announcer kept talking. The crowd kept waiting. It took a moment before the camera returned and the parachutes were finally seen. Nothing had changed in the sky. Only the direction of attention.

There are days on Washington Street like that. Something is already present—a pattern, a shift, a quiet signal—but it goes unnoticed because no one has thought to look there yet. We wait for a declaration, a headline, a reason to be told what matters. Mean-

Continued on page 8

Tuesday Literary Club Reads

DiAnna Loy with Marion Henderson, Tuesday Literary Club, Peru

The Tuesday Literary Club is celebrating America's 250th birthday this year by reading books about America's history. Marion Henderson chose to report on the Olympics using both *Fire on the Track* by Roseanne Montillo and *The First Lady of Olympic Track: The Life and Times of Betty Robinson* by Joe Gergen.

Progress for women participating in competition at the Olympics was slow—and at first limited to “ladylike” events. The first year that women were allowed to compete in track and field events was in 1928 at the Olympics held in Amsterdam. There was a lot of resistance. Among the 95 women from all over the world, 19 were from the U.S.

Betty Robinson's entry in the 100-meter dash was only her fourth competition. Betty's science teacher, Charles Price, was boarding the commuter train that would take him home and noticed Betty running to catch the train. He KNEW there was no way she'd make it—but she did and took the seat next to him. He asked if she would be willing to meet him after school and run the length of one of the school halls. Coach Price had measured the distance to run and timed her 50-yard dash at 6.2 seconds—barely a tenth of a second off the U.S. indoor record. She started letting Coach Price coach her and she started training with the boys.

Her first race was a regional event where she finished second to Helen Filkey, the U.S. record holder in the 100-meter dash. An invitation to join the Illinois Athletic Women's Club (IAWC) immediately followed. In her second race, in Chicago, Robinson beat Filkey by recording a time of 12 seconds, beating the official world record of 12.2 seconds, but the time was not official because of wind conditions. One month later Robinson traveled to Newark, NJ for the Olympic trials. Racing three times in an hour, she came in second in the final and was selected as a part of the team to represent the U.S. in the 1928 Olympics.

Betty was the only runner to qualify for the final of the 100-meter. The gun went off and 12.2 seconds later she broke the tape making history. The U.S. team returned home to crowds and ticker-tape parades. Betty returned to high school—to the classes, physical conditioning; clubs, and everything that went along with being an active member of her class.

After high school Betty's ambition was to earn a degree in physical education and after defending her title in the 1932 Olympics, be a coach by 1936. She continued to run and set records. Then in June 1931, the unthinkable happened. Betty joined her cousin for a ride in his airplane. The engine stalled and they plunged to the ground. Betty's arm was shattered, there was a deep gash over her right eye, and one of her legs was twisted and broken in three places.

Betty's recovery was slow and difficult. She would never be able to crouch at the starting block, but if she could qualify to become part of a relay team, then maybe, she could still qualify for the 1936 Olympics. Betty did qualify and was the third runner in the 4x100 relay and the U.S. team won after the German team dropped the baton. Betty had her second gold medal.

Betty Robinson retired after the 1936 Olympic Games. She was able to stay active in the sport in various ways. When she was 84 she was chosen to carry the Olympic torch for a few blocks as it made its way across the U.S. to Atlanta for the 1996 Games. Betty died on May 17, 1999.

There is much information in these books about the Olympic Games and the women that Robinson ran with at these events. The reading was exciting. For more information about the Olympics and the athletes, please check out the Auburn Memorial Library.

“Happy reading!”

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Continued from page 7

while, the thing itself continues on, steady and patient.

The house with the lights doesn't insist on being understood. It doesn't explain itself. It simply keeps time in its own way. Anyone paying attention can read it.

This Winter has been mild. The kind that encourages forgetting. But the prairie has a long memory. It remembers what happens when attention drifts, when comfort replaces readiness. March can still turn. April can still surprise. The same land that allows early warmth can summon Arctic cold without apology.

That knowledge comes the way the lights come on—quietly, persistently, waiting to be noticed.

By midmorning, the street is fully awake. Doors open and close. A dog barks, someone waves from a passing car. Life resumes its ordinary pace, and I know that if I wait too long, I'll miss something happening elsewhere.

Still, before I turn away, I check the house across the way once more. The lights are still on. They'll be on later, too.

Some things don't need explanation. They just need to be seen—before the camera pans past them again.

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Old Downtown Peru

John C. Chatelain, Omaha

In the 1960s you could do your shopping and have lunch at a restaurant or stop by the soda fountain at Bert Hill's Rexall Drug Store for a coke, green river or cherry phosphate all in downtown Peru. It had more going on then, but nothing compared to the old days, according to Ernest Longfellow. We join his walk down memory lane at the Southwest corner of 5th and California Street with T. J. Major's Delmonico Hotel, which had been razed in 1927. North of California on the east side had been the show-place home of Mr. Prouty, a Civil War veteran, a building more recently renowned as the V. F. W. Club. At the north end of the block, Tom and Earle Fisher had built a brick drug store building, where Happy Dillon's livery barn had been. W. W. Barnes, Ralph Antholz and Bert Hill later operated pharmacies in the building.

At the south end of the west side of the street Harry Wiley operated his drug store. To the north, the Phelps boys ran a moving picture show on the first floor and a dance hall on the second floor. In later years, Ralph and Carrol Beatty operated a garage in the property. The next building was the office of Dr. Bedell followed by the large house, built in 1909 by Fay Whitfield, which in later years was the home of the Johnny Allgood family.

In the Mini-Park, one can still find the old tile floor of the Fay Bakery. The building later housed Earl's café, operated later by Eldon Allgood and Rex Raines. J. C. Chatelain built his jewelry store north of the bakery in 1908. Next door was the Bishop and Barnes drugstore. Roy Peck's barber shop operated in the south half of this building in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

On the east side of 5th heading north from Park Street, was the Burriss Drug Store, later used by Dr. Joder and Dr. Thompson as their medical office. Next was the W. W. Mardis Grocery Store. After WWII, Martin Heuer ran the store, which included a locker plant. The next door to the north had been the Bank of Peru, shut down by the depression never to re-open. The Cejkas ran a dry-cleaning shop there for many years. More recently it housed Grannie's Donut Shop. The Peru Lumber Company built a variety store on the site of an old wooden building next door to the north, which became Bob McAdams' "Little Acorn Bar" (Duffy's). Next stood the telephone building, with its switch-board on the upper level and Dr. Dallam's dental office at street level. North of the telephone building was John Patterson's Drug Store. Next came Earl Deck's hardware store. The Ed Vance General Store, built in 1897, operated in the next building. Buildings to the north contained the "Howdy House", a restaurant operated by Doc and Jesse Railsback, a shoe shop, run by Claude Medley and Willie Pierce, the Abbott Photographic Studio, and finally an electronics store, run by Haney Milstead.

On the west side of 5th Street running north from Park was the Citizens State Bank, built by Jacob Good in 1891, now the home of Western National Bank. The Peru Pointer was printed on the second floor of the building. Next door was the Masonic Building, built in 1892, now the home of "Plum Crazy Lady." Where the mini-park is today, stood a large structure, built in 1906, as the M. E. Good Store, with groceries in the south section and dry goods in the north section. The present site of the Peru City Hall was Ray Weaverling's hardware store. A small café filled the next spot to the north. On to the north was H. E. Patterson's restaurant, which later housed Pete Whitlow's Barber Shop. The Carmen Bakery, next door to the north gave way to Earl Applegate's recreation parlor and café. On north was Martin Heuer's Red and White Store. The building later housed the Peru Pointer printing shop. Next came the Crystal Theater later known as the Peru Theater. The U. S. Post Office was the last building on the block.

Continuing north of Main, on the east side of 5th Street was David Jack's Store, which was replaced in 1928 with a filling station. To the north of that was the H. M. Mears Store. On the west side of 5th, was a store operated by Alf Brown, one of Peru's first merchants. The building was later used as a Ford Dealership. To the north was the old Episcopal Church, razed in 1905 to provide materials to build the Christian Church. Last, but not least, was a blacksmith shop built by J. C. Clifton.

Like many small towns, Peru's story involves a dramatic decline of a once vibrant commercial district. Businesses, supporting families, schools, churches, and civic organizations, sadly are no more. With imagination, creativity, leadership, community spirit and hard work, however, good things may still be in store for Peru.



Photo submitted by John Chatelain

Across the Wide Missouri, Peru, Nebraska 1854-1991, by Ernest Longfellow, pp: 106-111.

Slim's Stories by Tom Combs

Story Submitted by Cheri & Nick Petrillo

Photo submitted by Tom Combs, Auburn

In 1922 Auburn was quite a town. It had 5 doctors, 3 hospitals, 5 dentists, 4 clothing stores, 4 variety stores, 5 cleaners and tailors, 4 drug stores, 3 jewelry stores, 3 movie theaters, 4 hotels, 4 attorneys, 4 banks, 5 grocery stores, 2 produce creamery stations, 2 hardware stores, 7 auto/farm and implement dealers, 3 lumber yards, 1 greenhouse, 3 newspapers and printing businesses, 2 bakeries, 2 butcher shops, 2 train stations with passenger service to anywhere in the country. On top of all that, there were 7 other stores that sold everything from ice cream and fine chocolates to harnesses, feed and furniture!

Auburn had 2 business districts. I guess you could call the north one downtown and the south one uptown.

Gilmore's Department store was the largest. It was located in south Auburn and had everything a person could want or need. It was west of the Courthouse. You can still make out the "Gilmores" in large letters on the north side of the building that once held this fine store.

Parts of the building have had some improvements but most of it is slowly crumbling away. Another piece of Auburn's history slowly settles into the dust.

When dad was 9 years old he got a dog that he named Red Fox. I assume he was named this because he was red and resembled a fox. As he got older it became apparent he was a very smart, loyal dog. Dad could go uptown and buy meat at the butchers, give it to Red Fox to carry home in his mouth, and he'd deliver it to dad's mother at 1111 13th street.

Red Fox was a fighter. One day while he was taking a package home, another dog followed him. That dog wanted that package and was trying to get it. Red Fox was doing everything he could to get that package home. As soon as he delivered the package to dad's mother who was waiting on the porch, he spun around and took after that dog as fast as he could go.

One day while dad was walking home from hunting a big dog came out barking and charging down the driveway of a farmhouse he was passing. He jumped behind a large tree that had fallen over. The trunk was just off the ground about a foot. While the intrusive dog was barking on one side, dad rolled under the tree to the other. When the dog saw him on the other side, he leaped over the log and then dad rolled back again.

Then Red Fox came to the rescue. He grabbed the big dog by its back foot and bit down hard. The enemy let out a howl, whirled around and grabbed Red Fox and shook him. Dad got up and hit the aggressor with a stick right on its back. Back and forth the fight went. Rolling, avoiding, Red Fox biting, and dad hitting the big dog with the stick. Finally the attacker had enough and went whining and limping back up to the farmhouse. Seeing the mean dog give up and leave, dad and Red Fox stood there with triumphant smiles.



Wildlife Watch

Stephen Hassler, Peru

I expect the Sandhill Cranes are arriving these days around Grand Island and Kearney. If one is in that area during the month of March, on either side of the first day of Spring, you are likely to see the cranes. It is not the same for observing Snow Geese.

I visited the wildlife refuge February 8th. I was surprised that the marsh was still mostly frozen over given the 60 degree day, but the previous week of frigid temperatures must have frozen the water hard. There were hardly any shore birds at all. I saw four or five Bald Eagles and photographed them--but at a distance. A female's white head could be seen over the edge of her nest, and I believe it was her mate that posed for so long at the top of a Cottonwood Tree not too far away. I video-taped him for several minutes, and uploaded it to my YouTube channel, @yourcountryneighbor.

Temperatures were above 60 for several days mid February in southeastern Nebraska, with no ice left in the marsh at Loess Bluffs Refuge, and Snow Geese have been seen flying high and flying north. They'll be back if it gets cold again, and early March will see them leaving again if not gone. It's a back and forth flying pattern in sync with the warm and cold weather pattern.

On the 13th I was lucky all around. Snow Geese made a large presence. I have videos and photos (eagle on 3, swan on 16). The bald eagle is one of my best eagle photos. Of course the digital form (.pdf image), is better than on paper. You can

Continued on page 13 >>>>



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“We Thought They Were Home” A Plains Family Account, January 12, 1888

The morning of January 12, 1888, began like a gift. After weeks of bitter cold, the air felt almost kind. Mrs. Larsen remembered opening the door and thinking Spring had lost its way. Her two children—Anna, age nine, and Peter, seven—walked the mile to their rural Nebraska schoolhouse without heavy coats. Many children did the same. No one argued with weather that good.

By midmorning, the sky darkened without warning. The wind rose hard and sudden, as if a door had been thrown open to the north. Snow followed—not deep at first, but sharp, driven sideways. Inside the schoolhouse, the teacher felt the temperature fall so quickly the stove could not keep pace. She dismissed the children early, believing home was safer than waiting.

Anna and Peter started back together, following the familiar ruts of the wagon track. Within minutes, the path disappeared. The wind erased everything—fences, horizon, even sound. Snow stung their faces and froze their tears. They held hands and walked, then stumbled, then crawled.

At the Larsen farm, Mrs. Larsen watched the storm swallow the prairie. Noon passed. Then one o’clock. She assumed the children had stopped at a neighbor’s. By mid afternoon, she knew they had not.

When the storm eased the next day, neighbors formed a search party. They found Anna and Peter less than a quarter mile from home, crouched behind a low rise in the land, arms wrapped around each other. Peter’s boots were filled with snow. Anna’s scarf was frozen to her coat.

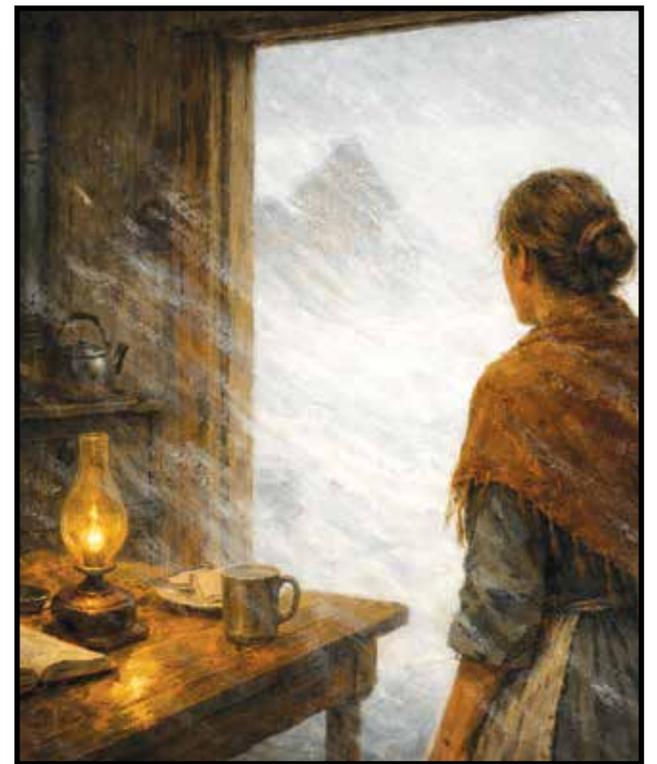
Newspapers later recorded their names among dozens of others. There were no photographs, no monuments—just a line of print and a date.

In the years that followed, Mrs. Larsen never spoke of that day without shaking. She kept the children’s schoolbooks in a trunk and would not throw them away. When asked why the children had been sent home, she always answered the same way:

“Because none of us knew what was coming.”

The Blizzard of 1888 did not announce itself. It arrived between lessons, between footsteps, between assumptions. For families like the Larsens, the prairie did not roar—it simply closed.

The storm passed quickly, leaving little evidence behind. What remained was a lesson learned the hard way. Mild mornings are not promises, and the prairie does not grow safer with time. Nebraska is still open country, still exposed to the same northern cold that swept in without warning in 1888. Complacency, more than weather, has always been the greater risk.



“At the Larsen farm, Mrs. Larsen watched the storm swallow the prairie. Noon passed. Then one o’clock. She assumed the children had stopped at a neighbor’s. By midafternoon, she knew they had not.”

Editor’s note;

The blizzard of 1888 was also known as the “Schoolhouse Blizzard.” An estimated 235 children perished, at least half were in Nebraska. It should not be confused with a blizzard that arrived a couple months later that devastated the eastern states.

There was a time when I was a boy that a blizzard prevented the barn from being seen just 100 feet away, or even the yard gate only 20 feet away. My mother insisted my father use a rope to guide his route to the barn to check on the cows. I don’t remember us having a rope that long, but I know my Mother was always cautious when it came to the weather.

A Prairie Love

Chapter Twelve: New Ground – July 1924

Summer had settled in earnest on the prairie, sun-heavy and humming with cicadas. The frame of the cabin was complete now, walls upright and roof in place. Lyle had even managed to salvage a cast-iron stove from a neighbor's auction, and it now sat proudly in the corner, waiting to warm future winters.

Cora arrived with a basket of tomatoes, bread, and peach preserves. She stepped over sawhorses and boards to find Lyle sanding the porch railings, his shirt sleeves rolled and brow damp with work. "Looks like home," she said, placing the basket on the step.

"Not quite," he answered, then paused. "But it's getting close."

They sat on the half-finished porch, feet dangling, sharing bread and fruit. A hawk circled in the blue above, and bees buzzed in the clover.

"I mailed the letter," Cora said after a while. "To Lincoln. I told them I won't be attending."

Lyle turned toward her, surprise flickering in his eyes. "Are you sure?"

She nodded. "I thought long and hard. It's a fine opportunity, but it's not the only kind of learning that matters."

He looked at her hands—sun-kissed, strong—and smiled. "Well then. I'll try to be worth staying for."

The wind picked up, rustling the cottonwoods. Across the field, the old windmill creaked and turned, its rhythm slow and sure.

"I think I'll plant hollyhocks by the porch," Cora mused. "They were Mama's favorite. And maybe a little plot for vegetables."

"Sounds like you've got plans," Lyle said.

"I do," she replied. "Big ones. Quiet ones."

Then he stood and reached into his pocket, drawing out a small ring—simple silver, with a speck of turquoise. He knelt, not with flourish but with quiet certainty.

"Cora Mae," he said, his voice steady as the prairie wind, "I want to build this life with you. Will you marry me?"

Cora's breath caught. She looked past him for a moment, across the field where the grasses bent and shimmered. The windmill turned slowly in the distance, like a keeper of time. In that moment, she glimpsed it all—the garden she would plant, the porch swing she would rock in, the Winters they would weather side by side. As if the future had opened a door and invited her in.

Then she looked back at him, her eyes wide and full. "Yes," she whispered. "Yes, I will."

They sat together until the sun dipped low, painting the prairie in gold. The house wasn't finished, and the future wasn't certain, but something had begun—something steady and real, like the wind in the tall grass or the turning of the windmill.

Letters from the Prairie

July 5, 1888

Nemaha County, Nebraska

12th Letter from Anna Wilhelmine Bauer to her sister Klara in Germany

My dearest Klara,

The prairie has taken on its full summer voice—tall grasses rustling in the breeze, insects humming, and the far-off creak of the windmill turning slow and faithful. It is the season of long light and wide skies, and yesterday we celebrated our first Fourth of July here in Nebraska.

It is not a holiday I grew up with, as you know, but here it is dear to the hearts of many. I tried to see it through Johann's eyes, and those of our neighbors, and I must admit—there was something stirring in it all.

The day began early with wagonloads of families gathering in the meadow near the creek, where some cottonwoods offer a little shade. There were picnic baskets full of cornbread, beans, cold ham, and jars of pickles, and one neighbor even brought a rhubarb pie still warm from her stove. The men raised a make-shift flagpole, and an old veteran read from the Declaration of Independence in a voice that trembled with pride.

Children ran wild, chasing hoops and dragonflies, and Lena spent much of the day barefoot, her dress muddied and her face shining with joy. A group of boys set off firecrackers, and the pops echoed across the flats like gunfire. Lena didn't like that part—she clung to me, hands over her ears—but she cheered for the fiddle tunes that came later, and even danced a little.

In the late afternoon, the heat turned heavy and strange. A bank of clouds gathered in the west, and by evening, the sky had taken on a greenish hue. I smelled the storm before I saw it—like rain and dust and electricity. When it hit, it came with such sudden fury that the men were shouting and the children were gathered into wagons. We all rushed home under a sky that cracked with lightning. The wind tore through the fields, bending our young corn nearly flat, and for a moment I feared we'd lose the roof. But the storm passed as quickly as it came. In its wake, everything was quiet but for the gentle dripping of rain from the eaves. The prairie smelled sweet and clean again, like it had been washed.

Later that night, I stepped outside, barefoot in the damp grass, and looked up at a sky full of stars. I thought of you, Klara—how you used to hum when the thunder rumbled, how we would sit in the attic window during summer storms and count the seconds between flash and boom.

There is still so much here that is strange and vast, but I begin to find familiar rhythms, small comforts, and shared laughter. We are building something, slow and steady. Like the windmill, always turning.

With all my love, Your Anna

Westward With Lewis & Clark

Chapter 10, Late August 1804,

Above the Platte, the river ceased pretending to be singular. It became a choice repeated a hundred times a day—left channel or right, shallow or shallower still. We learned to distrust anything that appeared convenient.

The water punished assumption.

Progress slowed. Miles shortened. The men measured days less by distance than by effort. A bend that should have taken an hour consumed half the afternoon. Poles snapped. Tempers did not, but they thinned.

Captain Lewis spoke more often with Clark now, voices low, heads inclined toward the water. Lewis remained intent on the living details—plants along the bank, birds whose names he tested aloud before committing them to paper. Clark concerned himself with the river's will, which seemed increasingly contrary.

At one crossing, the keelboat grounded so firmly we thought her fixed for good. The men went overboard without complaint, shoulders bent, boots lost to suction. When she finally broke free, it was with a sound like breath returning to a body thought dead.

The land drew farther back from the river. The banks lowered. Grasses took over where trees had stood. We saw fewer cottonwoods, and those we did see leaned as if shaped by years of argument with the wind.

Game was plentiful but wary. Deer watched from distance, then vanished. Prairie dogs stood upright near their mounds, barking sharp warnings as we passed.

Once, a herd of antelope crossed ahead of us—not in panic, but with the swift, practiced confidence of creatures long accustomed to open ground.

The nights cooled. Not sharply, but enough to remind us the season was shifting. Blankets were pulled tighter. Fires burned longer. The men spoke more often of the river ahead—what it might become, what it might demand.

One evening, Drouillard returned late from a hunt, empty-handed but alert. He said little. Only that he had found old fire rings well above the current waterline. Not recent. Not ancient either.

Lewis nodded. Clark marked the place in his journal without comment.

We camped closer together after that. Boats drawn in tight. Fires kept modest. Watches observed carefully, though nothing came to test them.

And yet, the sense of being within someone else's knowing did not leave us.

On my watch, the river lay flat and dark, reflecting no moon. The prairie beyond dissolved into shadow. I realized then how little sound the land required. A presence did not need to announce itself here. It could simply remain.

At dawn, mist clung low over the water. Lewis stood apart from the camp, examining a cluster of flowering stems with pale yellow heads. He looked, for a moment, entirely content—absorbed in detail, in the discipline of naming.

Clark called the men together soon after. The day's course would require patience. More wading. More judgment. Fewer miles. We pushed off quietly.

The river accepted us again, though not generously. As we moved northward, the current seemed to gather itself, as if preparing for something narrower, more decided.

Behind us lay the easier water. Ahead, a country that would not reveal itself all at once.

Elias LeGrand

Haunted?

by a quiet observer

Off County Road G, just south of Friend, Nebraska, a narrow lane opens into Gilbert Cemetery — a small, battered plot of prairie graves where locals say the pioneers never quite left. Visitors report strange noises, stones that “shift,” and stories passed down for generations about the Gilbert family who lie there.

Curiosity, more than belief, is what led me there.

The cemetery is easy to miss. No gate announces itself. No sign explains who rests there or why the land was set aside. The grass grows unevenly, shaped more by wind than by maintenance. Several stones lean at angles that suggest not drama, but time. Names are weathered. Dates are hard to read. Some markers are no more than rough limestone slabs, their lettering softened nearly smooth.

Nothing moved while I was there. Nothing spoke. The prairie offered only its usual sounds — wind through dry grass, the distant hum of a highway, a meadowlark calling from somewhere unseen.

And yet, it is not difficult to understand how stories grow in places like this.

Many of the people buried at Gilbert Cemetery arrived with little more than hope and muscle. They faced drought, illness, isolation, and winters that tested both body and faith. Children died young. Mothers died in childbirth. Men were buried before their work was finished. This was not tragedy in the theatrical sense, but persistence in the face of relentless uncertainty.

Graves like these were not meant to be visited often. They were meant to be remembered.

Over time, memory changes. What was once grief becomes story. What was once hardship becomes warning. The prairie has a way of keeping accounts even when records fade. Frost lifts stones. Roots shift foundations. Wind wears away names. To someone arriving at dusk, unfamiliar with the land, it can feel as though the ground itself is unsettled.

Perhaps that is what people sense when they speak of haunting — not spirits wandering, but unfinished lives held in place by soil and silence.

Standing there, I thought less about ghosts and more about endurance. About families who chose to stay when leaving might have been easier. About how much effort it takes to carve permanence from land that resists it. About how little remains once the struggle ends.

Places like Gilbert Cemetery do not need embellishment. They don't require belief to matter. They remind us that history is not always orderly or complete, and that some stories are preserved not in books, but in the way a place makes us slow down and pay attention.

<<<<Continued from page 9

go to www.yourcountryneighbor.com to see all my publications back 20 years or so.

On the 20th temperatures in Southeast Nebraska were in the teens again. I'm sure the marsh is frozen over, forcing birds south for awhile. When they return, there's a chance they will just fly right over this area without stopping by. But two years ago February was cold right up to the last week when about two million came and went in less than a week. That was amazing to see. Warmer temperatures are forecast for the 24th and beyond, so I'll have my camera ready. (p.s. The 26th was good)

The Weather Warms

Sheila Tinkham, Lincoln

The sap rises
Life itself exhales
The land eases into new birth
A sigh
A smile
The twittering of the birds
A look
A sweet caress
Life is renewed

Our eyes gaze
The moon so close and huge
Fresh as a round cheese
We devour the moon
Our eyes full to the brim
Other worlds beyond
Mars, the sun, the satellite stationary
Those brave astronauts who risk all
Challenger and Columbia
All killed
All risked all
The beauty of the unknown
The beauty of world beyond us
Like a full moon on this frigid night
Changing tides and weather
With one pull..

ARBOR CITY NEWS

Morton-James Public Library Calendar of Events March 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

All Programming is Free and Open to the Public

Lego Club Monday, March 2nd 3:30-5:30PM

Free build with Legos at the club or bring your own sets to work on. Ages 8 and older.
Free to attend.

AM Story Time Wednesday, March 4th 10:00AM - 10:30AM

Join us for a story time that will rock your socks! We'll sing a song, learn American Sign Language, and read stories about missing or mismatched socks. We will end with coloring pages. Story Times are geared toward children ages 2-6. Free! Families are welcome! Repeated on 3/5

Yarn Crafters Club Wednesday, March 4th 1:30PM - 3:00PM

Join us to work on your crocheting or knitting from 1:30-3:00 PM on the first Wednesday of each month. 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. Free to attend. Everyone is welcome who is 15 and older!

PM Story Time Thursday, March 5th, 4:00 - 4:30PM

Join us for a story time that will rock your socks! We'll sing a song, learn American Sign Language, and read stories about missing or mismatched socks. We will end with coloring pages. Story Times are geared toward children ages 2-6. Free! Families are welcome!

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

All ages and experience levels are welcome to join Chess Club that meets on Thursdays between 4:00 and 6:00 pm. If you have never played, members will teach you! Chess boards provided. 3/5, 3/12, 3/19, 3/26

Historical Myths of the American Funeral

Thursday, March 5th 6-7 pm

Presented by Amanda VanderBroek

This program explores the history of the American funeral and why sensational myths can sometimes get in the way of how people actually approached funerals, how families grieved, and where people were buried. This program is free and open to the public.

Papercraft Party! Saturday, March 7th 9:00AM – Noon

Decorate your scrapbook. Fill your junk journal or design your own greeting cards. It's all free! Join us for a Papercraft Party on the first Saturdays of March, June, and September in the Kimmel Gallery! Bring your own project to work on. We provide paper/stickers/tape/ markers/scissors. New members will receive a scrapbook to fill! Bring your own pictures! No registration.

Library Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 11th 4:00PM - 6:00PM

Youth St. Patrick's Day Party

Saturday, March 14th 10:00 - 11:00AM

Youth and family are invited to this free event where we will make a paper craft, enjoy cookies, coloring pages, and selfie station with our mascot Mr. Oakley! No registration required.

Lego Club Monday, March 16th

3:30PM - 5:30PM

Free build with Legos at the club or bring your own sets to work on. Ages 8 and older.
Free to attend.

Afternoon Book Club Tuesday, March 17th

2:00PM - 3:00PM

Beloved by Toni Morrison

14 March 2026 Your Country Neighbor

AM Story Time Farm Theme

Wednesday, March 18th 10:00 - 10:30AM

We will sing a song, learn signs in American Sign Language, and read farm stories. We will then decorate our own farm picture with crayons and stickers. Story Times are geared toward children ages 2-6. Free! Families are welcome! There is no registration. Repeated on 3/19.

Evening Book Club

Wednesday, March 18th

5:30PM - 6:30PM

Never Have I Ever by Joshilyn Jackson

PM Story Time Farm Theme

Thursday, March 19th 4:00 - 4:30PM

We will sing a song, learn signs in American Sign Language, and read farm stories. We will then decorate our own farm picture with crayons and stickers. Story Times are geared toward children ages 2-6. Free! Families are welcome! There is no registration.

Peter Fletcher Classical Guitar Program

Thursday, March 19th 6:00PM - 7:00PM

Peter will perform music from the new CD, as well as the Bach Chaconne, Usher Waltz by Russian composer Nikita Koshkin, a very special arrangement of the famous Shaker hymn Simple Gifts, and music by Giuliani, Ponce and Tansman. The concert will culminate with the luscious Cordoba and powerful Leyenda by Spanish composer Isaac Albeniz. Fletcher has been performing full time for over 20 years. He made his Carnegie Hall debut in 2007 and performed there multiple times since.

JoAnn Charles: Romance Writers Workshop

Saturday, March 21st 10:00AM - 11:00AM

Whether you're dreaming about writing your first romance or polishing a manuscript in progress, this one-hour workshop will walk you through the joys and heartache of romance writing—without the overwhelm. Taught by Nancy Sharp Wagner, aka JoAnn Charles, author of the Journey to Bluestem romance series, this workshop will share the essentials that make romance work: lovable characters, believable chemistry, meaningful obstacles, and a deeply satisfying happily-ever-after, and will share one simple, repeatable structure you can use to either plot a new novel or revise a work-in-progress.

Lord of the Rings Party

Friday, March 27th 6:00PM - 7:30PM

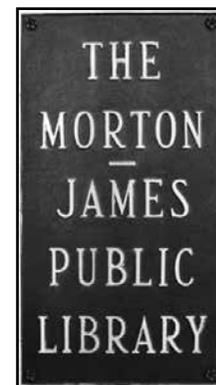
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

The Morton-James Public Library is hosting our first ever Lord of the Rings Party on Friday, March 27th from 6:00-7:30 PM. Space is limited so please register by calling the Library at 402-873-5609 or stopping in person. This party is for teens and adults (age 13 and older). We will have activities like button making, map making, and decorating a journal so you can keep track of all your adventures. Costumes are encouraged, but not required. We do ask that outfits not include any weaponry. (The Library does not want your sword, your bow, or your axe. Sorry.) Free grab bags! This is a great chance to meet other Tolkien and fantasy fans. You might even find something to check out!

KIMMEL GALLERY MARCH 6-25

CELEBRATE Student Art Month

Artwork of all varieties from Nebraska City Middle and High School and Lourdes Central Catholic. Exhibit is available during regular Library hours.



The Day Nebraska Planted the Future

In the Spring of 1872, Nebraska did something quietly remarkable. It paused, looked at the open land stretching in every direction, and decided to think ahead.

At the time, the prairie was honest but unforgiving. Trees were scarce. Wind swept unchecked across fields and towns alike. Shade was rare, lumber expensive, fuel precious. To many settlers, trees were a luxury the land had forgotten.

J. Sterling Morton thought otherwise.

Morton, a journalist and editor of the Nebraska City News, believed that trees were not decoration but infrastructure. They slowed wind, held soil, cooled homes, sheltered livestock, and made farms livable over the long haul. He proposed something simple and practical: a single day set aside for planting trees.

On April 10, 1872, Nebraska observed the first Arbor Day.

What followed surprised nearly everyone. Families turned out with shovels. Schools canceled lessons and handed children saplings instead. Farmers planted windbreaks. Towns lined streets. By day's end, an estimated one million trees had been planted across the state.

Newspapers took notice—not just in Nebraska, but nationwide. This was not a ceremony or a speech. It was work. The kind of work that assumed a future worth preparing for.

For children, Arbor Day carried special meaning. They were often given responsibility for a single tree and expected to tend it year after year. In a young state still defining itself, that small act taught something lasting: care extended beyond the present moment.

The idea spread quickly. Other states followed. Arbor Day became a national observance, but its roots remained unmistakably Nebraskan—born of necessity, patience, and faith in what time and effort could produce together.

What makes Arbor Day endure is not the number of trees planted, impressive as that was. It is the mindset behind it. Nebraska settlers understood hardship well. They knew drought, wind, fire, and loss. Arbor Day did not deny those realities. It answered them.

Planting a tree was an act of optimism grounded in experience. It said: we will be here long enough for this to matter.

Many of those early trees are gone now, claimed by age, storms, or progress. But their descendants still line farmyards, shelter houses, and break the wind on open ground. They stand as living evidence that some of the most meaningful decisions are the quiet ones, made without certainty and without applause.

In a state shaped by weather and time, Arbor Day remains one of Nebraska's clearest statements of intent—not just to survive the land, but to improve it for those who would come next.



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Arbor City News

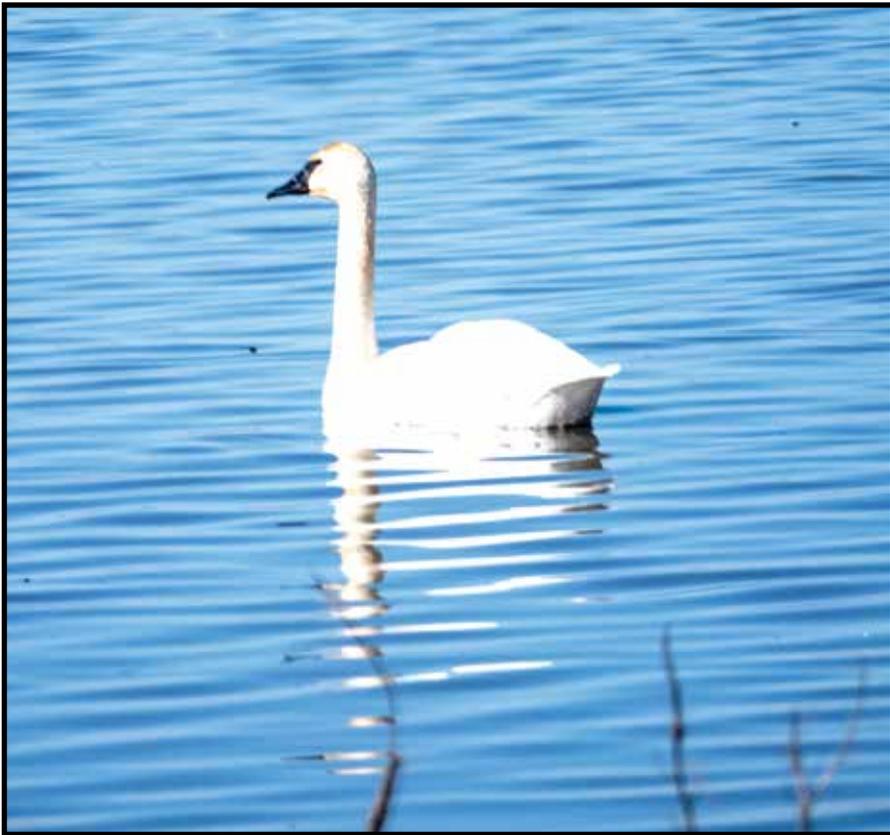
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Your Country Neighbor

A Nebraska Regional Magazine (w/News)

ARBOR CITY NEWS

News from Nebraska City



Trumpeter Swan on beautiful day at the Refuge with sunny skies and blue water.
February 26, 2026

Ancestors

Bruce Madsen, Nebraska City

A lot of time I have spent recently, in my easy chair
Discovering things about my ancestors that I was vaguely unaware
I never paid much attention or gave it much thought,
About how I got here, where I came from,
And do I deserve to be apart of what my ancestors sought

I give thanks to those before me that took the time
To collect the stories and pictures that overtime, have followed the family line
With information that enlighten my interest and began to fill a void in my mind
That I didn't know existed until I took the time
To discover just what I might find

From across the ocean, bravely they came
Searching for a new life, in a new country with a different name
What an adventure that must have been
Worrying about the future and how it might end

But come they did to start a new life
Leaving behind all the persecution and strife
"No future for the children," was what one had said.
"We're going in search of a better life that I know lies ahead.

There's too much politics and government reprimand
We're going to start over in a brand new land."
On boats they came with a determination to cope
And with excited feelings and promises of hope.

I read all the stories, sometimes into the night late
Looked at pictures, read obituaries, and tried to memorize dates
Read and reread until I came to the end
Then sat quiet for awhile.... and finally said, "Amen."

I guess now I know from where I came
My ancestors before me get all the blame
Their lives had to be hard and full of uncertainty
But they pushed on with dreams and visions of a better life to be

So, to all those before me, generations apart
I have a feeling of closeness that lingers around my heart
I am quietly proud of my family tree
So I say, "thank you" for all the lives that led to me.



Bald Eagle nesting at the Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge.
The other nest is unoccupied, so please don't disturb.



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Not quite a million, but 100s of thousands... worth the trip, February 26, 2026.
 I made some good videos for my YouTube channel;
www.YouTube.com/@yourcountryneighbor
 But please give me time to process them, and to publish "Your Country Neighbor."

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Trumpeter Swans' mid day napping at the Refuge. February 26, 2026

Poetry

by Devon Adams, Nebraska City

Poetry

by Devon

Adams,

Nebraska

City

A BACK DOOR

Seasons have a rhythm and a place and time, usually. Except in Spring. Old man Winter hides up there in the Dakotas after spitting nasty hail and frigid air in January. Then in a warm breath full of lies, he takes a nice nap out on the open prairies. Sleep blows up when the geese fly over. The old man jumps out of slumber, stomps in through the back door of Spring, and puts on a doozy of a storm, just to make a point about assumptions and realities!

DARK OF THE MOON

The earie light of night, when the moon wears a black shadow over her face, is like looking at a thousand flashlights through a filmy lace gown. It is shear here and there, but is also dense and dark where the fabric hangs in layers. Sky stars scattered like loose diamonds poke their beams through the lacy holes, telling us how much we don't know about the things we can't see out there beyond our sight and our comprehension. It feels like a magic curtain hiding ancient secrets older than time itself.

LOVE ON THE WING

By Valentine's Day, they'd flown in on a south wind. Winter was on the calendar on the wall in the hall, but Spring was singing in the sun. Love in the air and birds on the wing can be a beautiful thing, and robins were in the mood to brood. But the rude dude from the north pole blew a blizzard, and Spring ran down to Dallas to stay until the clouds cleared away. Time will tell, but sometimes it lies.

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LIFE ON A LIMB

Do you feel that you are hanging by a thread from a limb on a tall tree that is blowing in the wind? You can't remember how to relax, or to have fun. You have a stiff neck from looking over your shoulder for the creeping menace that is certain to spoil your day. Dance your way on the floor out the door to real air and sky and trees, and bees buzzing busy lives next to a park with a lark singing happy songs next to a lake like a mirror. Pick up a leaf and sit on a bench. You are at the corner of Peace Park and Relax Road. Sit still and breathe. Stay all afternoon.

SPRING PAINTING

Now the beige and brown and black and gray have got to go and stay away until the sun ball rolls back across the sky to it's winter low. Now it's time to splash some gaudy paint all over bushes and onto trees so color blooms in fancy blossoms baring petals soft as velvet and bright as painters' palettes hanging from the branches. Planting seeds to grow into fields of flowers nodding in the summer wind is a total delight. Hanging over all is the infinite blue of sky that is as deep as forever.

Window On Fifth Street

Stephen Hassler, Peru

On both sides of my window on Fifth Street, we are all getting older.

In ancient times—long before humans settled down to farm—people survived by following the herds; buffalo, wildebeest, whatever moved and could be hunted, was food. Survival depended on staying with the group. When the elderly could no longer keep up, they fell behind. “Safety in numbers” was as true then as it is now. Falling behind rarely meant dying peacefully of old age.

Civilization changed that. In developed societies, those who can no longer see, walk, or care for themselves are supported. But many older adults don’t want to be supported. They want to remain independent. And when retirement doesn’t resemble the fishing-boat fantasy, they look for work. And that’s why I’m seeing more gray hair behind fast-food counters.

That’s where the contradiction begins.

Employers say they want energy, enthusiasm, flexibility. Translation: young and inexpensive. Minimum wage if possible. Meanwhile, in this century, some younger workers don’t consistently meet those expectations. Some don’t show up. Some don’t call. Wages don’t seem to drive survival the way they once did. One might assume there’s still a safety net at home.

Applications still ask for birthdates. So what changed?

Maybe desperation. Maybe necessity. Maybe an employer needed someone reliable and finally looked past the number on the form. And maybe they discovered something unexpected: loyalty, punctuality, focus, and a genuine willingness to work.

We all know people who have aged poorly, whose health declined with the years. It’s easy to assume that decline is inevitable. I don’t buy that. Age alone doesn’t deteriorate people. Poor habits do. But a significant number of older adults are healthy. Most can’t lift 100 pounds—but neither can most 16-year-olds. Fast-food restaurants, hardware stores, others, which rely on dependable part-time workers, are discovering that reality out of necessity.

Have you noticed it too?

We may be seeing a cultural shift. For a long time, older workers knew their value even if employers didn’t. Now employers may be discovering it as well.

Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson, Auburn

It’s March, people! The month of returning to Daylight Saving Time (DST), St. Patrick’s Day, Spring Equinox, Palm Sunday. So much to think about. Where to begin? I’ll just take them in order.

Daylight saving time (DST) returns on Sunday, March 8. That is way too early for my liking. I was just enjoying waking up with daylight, and now I have to go back to getting up in the dark. Some people think the clock changes associated with DST are detrimental to one’s health. I have never heard anyone associate time zone changes with health impacts, which seems odd. We will be testing the effects of both on the same day this year, as March 8 is the day we begin our return trip from visiting family in Arizona.

But, Arizona does not observe DST. So, if we leave Tucson at 8:00 a.m., and it takes approximately three hours to reach the point of crossing into New Mexico, instead of it being 11:00 a.m., the local time will be noon DST. A little farther on, we will cross from Mountain Time into Central Time, which is later than Mountain Time, meaning we will jump ahead another hour. So, instead of the time being 4:00 p.m., for example, it will already be 5:00 p.m., I think. It’s a good thing our car clock will change automatically so I don’t have to figure it out. I will be on the lookout for unusual reactions to the double time changes.

St. Patrick’s Day is March 17. I’m not Irish, and I don’t like beer (green or otherwise), so it’s pretty irrelevant to me. I know, I know, on St. Patrick’s Day everyone is Irish. I will wear green and if someone offers me corned beef and cabbage, I’ll eat it. But that’s about it. I’ll take a pass on the “Kiss me, I’m Irish” tradition.

Now, my most anticipated day in March: Spring Equinox, Friday, March 20!! I always enjoy the trick of balancing an egg on its end on the Spring and Fall Equinoxes. Naysayers claim there is nothing to the idea that the Equinox has anything to do with balancing eggs. But I have tried to do it on other days of the year, and it has never worked, except on the Equinox.

But aside from egg tricks, I am drawn to observing natural events, especially those that do not require being up in the middle of the night. Mind you, I would stay up or get up for star-gazing, but Hubby has a very strong circadian rhythm. Each night is a “little hibernation” for him. You’ve probably heard of bears coming out of hibernation early in a very grumpy mood, which can lead to dangerous encounters with humans. Waking Hubby with an alarm clock in the middle of the night could lead to a similar situation. If only I could time bathroom visits to night sky events...

Palm Sunday does not always occur in March, but it does this year. That means there is about a 20% chance of snowfall or snow on the ground in the Midwest (according to my Google search). Snow may not be welcome on Palm Sunday, but at least it doesn’t necessarily disrupt egg hunts. Of course, with Easter only one week after Palm Sunday, egg hunts are not guaranteed to be snow-free then. With two special days a week apart, people have two options for gathering with family. It’s kind of like having Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Nine out of ten kids say that two egg hunts are better than one, so maybe watch the forecast and move up the egg hunt if the Easter forecast is dismal. You can always have a second hunt if Easter turns out to be sunny and warm.

That about wraps up the month of March. I’m already looking forward to those April showers and garden planning. Happy Spring, everyone.



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