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 A Magazine for Small Towns and Rural America



Rodeo Photos page 10



Peru State wins its first home game of the season; more photos on page 6.



The Crescent Sun; Almost "Totality", August 21, 2017
 (Eclipse Article Page 4)

Your Country Neighbor

*Voices and Views From the
 Valleys of the Nemaha*

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

Contents

| | |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|
| "Guitar Poems" by Steve Adams..... | 2 |
| "OUR LITTLE TOWN" | 2 |
| Medicare Part D Plan Comparison..... | 3 |
| Where were you during the Solar Eclipse?... | 4 |
| Devon's Poetry..... | 5 |
| PSC Football Photos..... | 6 |
| Merri's "Diary of a Part-time Housewife" | 8 |
| Wildflowers & Butterflies..... | 4 & 9 |
| Nemaha County Rodeo Photos..... | 10 |
| "Alzheimer's Affects Us All"..... | 11 |
| PSC Football Schedule..... | 12 |
| VALENTINO'S COUPON! | 12 |

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Bring along your Medicare card and a list of the prescription drugs you take.

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|---------|---------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Oct. 19 | Auburn | Auburn Library | 1810 Courthouse Ave | 10:00-4:30 | 402-274-4755 |
| Oct. 20 | Plattsmouth | Plattsmouth Library | 400 Ave. A | 9:00-4:00 | 402-267-2205 |
| Oct. 24 | Syracuse | Otoe Co. Extension | 620 1 st Street | 9:00-4:00 | 402-269-2301 |
| Oct. 25 | Sterling | First National Bank | 255 Hwy. 41 | 9:00-3:30 | 402-866-2050 |
| Oct. 26 | Sterling | First National Bank | 255 Hwy. 41 | 9:00-3:30 | 402-866-2050 |
| Oct. 31 | Nebraska City | The Ambassador | 1800 14 th Avenue | 9:00-4:30 | 402-269-2301 |
| Nov. 1 | Plattsmouth | Plattsmouth Library | 400 Ave. A | 9:00-4:30 | 402-267-2205 |
| Nov. 2 | Pawnee City | Pawnee Co. Extension | Courthouse | 9:00-4:00 | 402-852-2970 |
| Nov. 7 | Auburn | Auburn Library | 1810 Courthouse Ave. | 10:00-4:30 | 402-274-4755 |
| Nov. 8 | Tecumseh | Ridgeview Towers | 1143 N. 3 rd Street | 9:00-4:00 | 402-335-3669 |
| Nov. 9 | Weeping Water | Cass Co. Extension | 8400 144 th St., Ste. 100 | 9:00-4:30 | 402-267-2205 |
| Nov. 14 | Pawnee City | Pawnee Co. Extension | Courthouse | 9:00-4:00 | 402-852-2970 |
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| Nov. 16 | Syracuse | Otoe Co. Extension | 620 1 st Street | 9:00-4:00 | 402-269-2301 |
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| Dec. 7 | Nebraska City | The Ambassador | 1800 14 th Avenue | 9:00-4:30 | 402-269-2301 |

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Where Were You During The 2017 Total Eclipse?

Stephen Hassler

For some, the event was just a little miracle, like rainbows, but less frequent. For others, the parting of the clouds and the ceasing of the rain, exposed the wonder of the event, when seconds earlier human doubt questioned the effectiveness of promise, prayer, and possibility. Although the day began with hope, for some, hope was slowly diluted by weather to almost nothing, until a miraculous moment.

For those who gave up and looked away, back to more earthly concerns, their lack of faith or hope blinded themselves from the experience. Others under clear skies and better locations had life easier. They lay back on grass, beaches, and mountaintops, and were served generously.

If you were not part of the experience, you were doing something everyday-normal, like feeding your dog, changing a diaper, or performing brain surgery. And if so, you missed focusing your attention far away from normal; daylight turning into night in the middle of the day, a view of 'sunset' on every horizon, masses of humanity looking toward heaven in synchrony. A heavenly event, a work of God, like rainbows.

If there is a lesson to be learned from this event, perhaps it is this; during the next eclipse, or even in the next moment, pay attention! And remember, little miracles are just as miraculous as the big ones.

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Monarch on Butterfly Bush, August 16th, 2017, Brownville, Nebraska

Poetry by Devon Adams

NIGHT SPACE

In a soft dimming of the day, with its rosy edges and gold highlights, the sky of night is coming into view. After even the last reflected light is gone from the horizon, the dome over our heads becomes an inky black backdrop for the drama that is deep space. Measurement is done by cold, calculating instruments in shiny laboratories, or in remote haunts where magnifying glass is arrayed in massive telescopes on this earth, or out beyond the blue of atmosphere, where the magic Hubble lenses capture images that are far, far away. We can see the past through these instruments, because distance equals time, and the light of other worlds and stars and the gas clouds of creation come to us from the edges of eternity, or what we can calculate as the beginning of time. From a human vantage point, somewhere on these plates of granite that float on top of flowing magma, we see only a beautiful velvet robe draped above us, that is scattered with blinking sparkles. Maybe some day we will know the whole story that the light is telling us.

LOCUST SHELLS

The ear numbing buzz of locusts is slowly becoming a silent story of insects who return every year in an ancient cycle of renewal. Within each clinging shell, there is also the memory of sound that came from a live being. It is their way of leaving a message about their lives, like a writer writing stories with a pen. Next spring, those hollow words will be waiting to be found, by those who look for magic in the world.

TOASTED

Smoky ribbons float across the streets and yards, carried by lazy breezes with a hint of chill. The nostalgic aroma of wood fires permeates the damp of evening, as people burn fallen branches and huddle near the fire. Another delightful added touch mixes into the smoke with the mouth-watering smell of roasting hot dogs. Nothing can paint a better picture of autumn coming away from summer, unless it is the indescribably delicious and gooey phenomenon of chocolate bars, toasted marshmallows and graham crackers all smushed together in a mix of unforgettable tastes and textures.

TRIBUTARIES

The leaves hang, holding on with tiny fingers to their mother's arm. Wind twists in swirls and they dance in response, flashing light from waxy faces. There are rivers of life embedded in each of them, in the tiny veins that are slightly raised, like the bloodlines in human hands. As tributaries, they branch out in ever widening patterns, as family generations do, but always with close connections to their roots.

WHISPERS IN THE GRASS

The boiling cauldron of summer has been taken off the stove, and a more reasonable atmosphere has replaced it. To doze in the long prairie grass on the rise above the river is a luxury to be cherished. But the time to enjoy it may be limited, if the autumn becomes one of those mired in mud and cold rains that only continues into an early winter. However, as you lie in the sweet scent of the warm hillside, the wind whispers in your ears about easy days ahead, and good harvests and a fruitful tomorrow. No need to know if the words are real, or if it's only a dream. For now, the sound itself is the only truth you need.

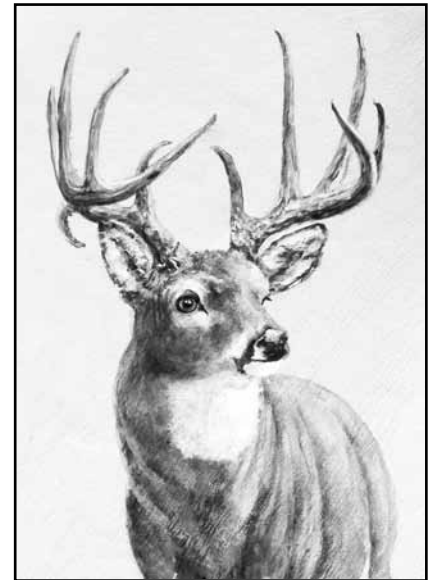
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STALK TALK

Green uniforms have faded from the constant sun into tans and browns, and the army is weary from standing in rigid rows for so many days. They are ready to meet the machines of destruction, as farmers come to collect their corn. Conversations continue at a steady, nervous pace, as speculation runs wild about the amount of moisture in the kernels of their cobs. Talk is getting louder as long leaves rustle into each other on a chilly autumn breeze. Better to surrender to the pickers than to be left to die from rot and ice and snow in a wet winter that follows an autumn drenched with too much rain. But there are other voices, drifting through the field, from hunters hoping for an early harvest, so that deer won't have the rows of stalks for perfect cover from the cold bullets that will be searching for their blood red hearts.

Peru State Football Homegame, August 26, 2017



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Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

The dog days of summer are nearly behind us. That is, if you are using the phrase – as most people do these days – to mean the hottest days of the season. Days when it's so hot, even dogs are too lethargic to move out of the way of traffic, or to chase a rabbit. That image of a dog chasing a rabbit actually explains the origin of the phrase.

Rather than referring to hot weather, the dog days refer to Sirius, the “dog” star and its position in the heavens when it appears to rise just before the sun, in late July. Sirius is the point of the dog's nose in the constellation Canis Major, which appears to be chasing Lepus, the hare.

Alas, our knowledge of astronomy has gone the way of our knowledge about most things related to the natural world. Even though the meanings of terms or phrases have been lost to most of us, the phrases themselves remain in use. Being the resourceful species that we are, we invent new meanings, which sometimes have some connection to the original meaning, as in the case of the dog days of summer. And sometimes not.

NationalGeographic.com quotes Anne Curzan, an English professor at the University of Michigan, as follows, “Now people come up with other explanations for why they're called the ‘dog days’ of summer, [like] this is when dogs can go crazy. This is a very human tendency.”

Well, at least we still care enough to come up with some explanation. In that spirit, I am officially declaring that the dog days of summer refers to those days when cucumbers grow so long and so fast that they resemble the mid-section of an animal-balloon Dachshund. I'll concede that my explanation is a bit of a “stretch,” if you'll pardon the pun. Perhaps the cucumbers are just “going crazy.”

I planted cucumbers this year for the first time in well over a decade. On August 18, Hubby picked nine cukes that measured a combined nine and a half feet and weighed a total of nearly ten and a half pounds. FYI, they're Henry Field's Tasty Green hybrid variety. On the morning of the 20th, he found another giant that he had apparently overlooked on the 18th. On the afternoon of the 20th, two more behemoths had materialized. We've decided to let the next big one remain on the vine to see just how big it will get. We're easily entertained.

What with air pollution and light pollution (plus those annoying mosquitos that come out at dusk) studying constellations is not nearly as doable now as it was in the days of navigating by the stars. Still, I should try to learn to recognize more than just the Big and Little Dippers. I think I'll wait until after the first frost, though, when the mosquitoes (and the cucumbers) have ended, along with the dog days of summer.



Normally the August migration of the *Painted Lady* butterfly is at such a high altitude that they are not observed, but this August tens of thousands, perhaps millions, were at ground level in Nebraska, Missouri, Kansas and likely beyond.



A variety of *Golden Rod* along Highway 67 southeast of Peru, Nebraska.



Variety of *Canada Thistle*; a popular weed in Nebraska, a wildflower in Texas.

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Alzheimer's Affects Us All



Alzheimer's and Travelling: The Value of a Trial Run

By Lee Nyberg

If Autumn's cooler weather makes you want to travel, especially with the roads free of families with school-aged children, do a little extra planning if you'll be traveling with a loved one who has Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia. In the planning stage, the most important aspect to evaluate is whether your loved one can withstand the strain of traveling and you can manage the need to be both the "lead traveler" and caregiver for your loved one. Most people with dementia value routine, familiarity and structure and their needs for these elements of safety and security grow as their disease progresses. Part of the lead traveler's role is to provide a smooth and calm path for the person with dementia.

When deciding whether to travel, review these points:

A trial run. Go on a one-night trip to see how your loved one would respond to traveling.

Known territory? Consider traveling to places that were familiar and known to the person with Alzheimer's prior to their disease, such as the family cabin.

Tortoise or hare? Will a hurried travel schedule be possible, or will it be too disorienting and overwhelming? People with dementia become increasingly susceptible to bewilderment as their disease evolves. Crowded environments, like airports, can lead to agitation.

Need a helping hand? Consider taking a caregiver (professional or experienced family/friend) on the trip who can help provide a calming presence for the person with Alzheimer's and respite for family members.

Here's a checklist for a smoother trip:

- Travel on a less busy day. Traveling during the days just before Thanksgiving is exhausting for everyone, regardless of cognitive ability.
- If flying, schedule the flight during the best time for the person with Alzheimer's. Make sure there is extra time for any connecting flights as people with Alzheimer's disease do not like to be hurried. If it is possible to schedule a non-stop flight, it may be worth the extra cost.
- Arrange for airport staff to assist with a wheelchair, if needed.
- Be sure to pack extra clothes, medications, and important documents (list of medications, phone number for physician, emergency contact, advanced directives and insurance information) into the carry-on.
- When traveling by car, make frequent stops and be sure to stay with your loved one at all times in gas stations and restaurants. Even in the early stages of dementia, disorientation can be greater when surroundings are noisy, busy, and unfamiliar.
- Play familiar music and bring hand games or projects that can keep your loved one's hands busy.
- Take along snacks and bottled water. A person with dementia may be agitated due to hunger or thirst but be unable to communicate needs.
- Incorporate as much familiarity and routine as possible.
- Buy travel insurance in the event you need to return home earlier than planned.

Travel, with assistance, may be enjoyable for someone who is in the early stages of Alzheimer's. However, if a loved one has progressed to moderate Alzheimer's or beyond, their own personal experience of dementia should be considered before embarking on a journey away from the familiar territory of home.

Sources: Alzheimer's Association, Banner Health

Lee Nyberg serves older adults and their families through education on aging issues and her company, Home Care Assistance. Visit HomeCareAssistanceOmaha.com to learn more.



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2017-18 SEASON



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| | WILLIAM PENN UNIVERSITY October 21 11AM Peru State College <i>ESPN 3 TV Game</i> | GRACELAND UNIVERSITY October 28 2PM Peru State College <i>Homecoming</i> | CULVER-STOCKTON COLLEGE November 4 1PM Canton, MO | BENEDICTINE COLLEGE November 11 1PM Peru State College <i>Senior Day</i> | | |

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