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April 2007



The cross seen in the picture on the left, graced the top of a bell-tower in Ouray, Colorado...not my back yard, but a nice place to vacation, and another place to get good pictures.

A little Summer was had in March after a little Winter snow earlier in the month. As this April issue is being published, we can look back at eighty degree temperatures in late March, but there are freezing temperatures forecast for early April. At least we have had some good rain. As Karen says, don't put your snow shovel away yet.



Quilters! Collectors! The Nebraska Shop Hop is April 12 through 21. See page 4 for Shops and Story.

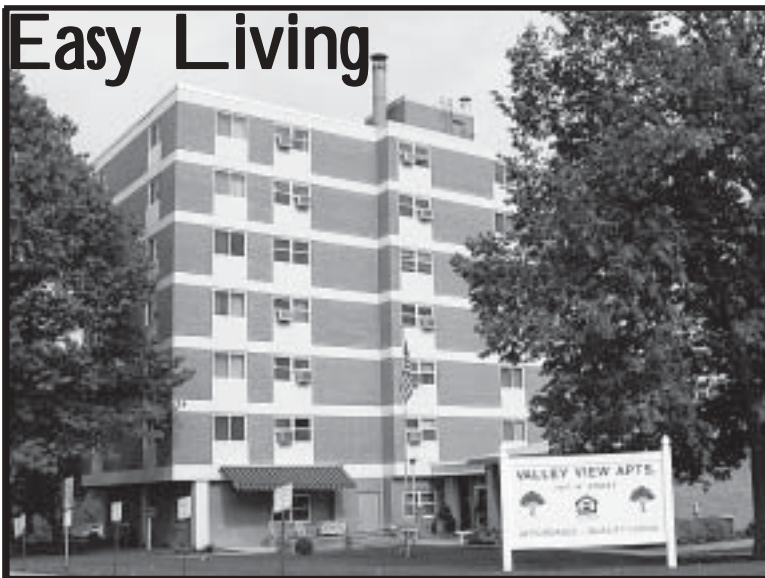
See more color pictures when you visit:
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They were here, now they're gone...Snow Geese have traversed this 4-corners area for hundreds, if not thousands of years. After channeling and drainage, a water refuge like this one becomes very crowded at times.

Voices from the Valley

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Your

COUNTRY NEIGHBOR

Voices from the Valley of the Nemaha

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Thank you!

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In Missouri: Mound City, Rock Port.

In Kansas: Axtell, Baileyville, Beattie, Centralia, Corning, Fairview, Frankfort, Goff, Hiawatha, Home, Morrill, Sabetha, Seneca, and Wetmore.

In Iowa: Hamburg, Riverton, Sidney.

Nebraska Travel and Tourism Division Impressed With Nemaha County's Tourism Opportunities

Submitted by Mary Kruger

Staff from the Nebraska Travel and Tourism Division recently visited Nemaha County, Nebraska as part of its tourism assessment program, TARGET (Tourism Assessment Resource and Growth Evaluation Team). Some of the wonderful attractions and sites the team visited included Coryell Park, Peru State College, Auburn, Brownville, Glenrock, Nemaha, Indian Cave State Park, Hearts United for Animals, the Heritage Highway Scenic Byway, and a variety of wonderful backcountry rural roads.

After spending many fun-filled hours with four of the Nemaha County Development Alliance tourism champions, TARGET members wholeheartedly agreed that Nemaha County offers a wide variety of tourist opportunities and activities for tourists and visitors alike. The country's backcountry rural roads are treasures that are not marketed enough. Some of the state's most gorgeous and breathtaking scenery lies along these dirt and gravel roads. Steep hills, quiet cow pastures, meadows, and vibrant farmsteads await the traveler who simply wants to experience life at a slower, more relaxed pace.

TARGET members were amazed by Nemaha County's Coryell Park and feel this place truly is a gem hidden within plain sight. It is ideal for community festivals and events, such as Arts in the Park, a Shakespeare on the Green festival, outdoor concerts and plays, and flea markets. Peru State College is one of Nebraska's most attractive state colleges with a number of tourist possibilities, such as the redevelopment of Neal Park, the arboretum, possible Elderhostel programs, and artist workshops. Last but not least is one of southeastern Nebraska's timeless treasures-Indian Cave State Park. The one lane road within the park leads visitors through gorgeous terrain that, regardless of the time of year, is stunning. In fact the fall colors in Indian Cave State Park can be easily compared to the brilliant and vibrant colors that are found across New England.

Nemaha County has much to be proud of: small towns, friendly citizens, plenty of outdoor recreational opportunities, and backcountry rural roads that'll "knock your socks off".

Staff from the Nebraska Travel and Tourism Division will soon begin working on developing a TARGET report to outline its marketing and development recommendations. Local officials and residents can implement the recommendations to ensure people from both inside and outside Nebraska know what untold beauty this county holds. Once the report is completed staff will return to Nemaha County to officially present it to the community. Local officials will then work closely with the Nebraska Travel and Tourism Division to implement particular recommendations and bring more tourists and their dollars to Nemaha County.

Side notes-

As we were traveling the "backroads" they were also amazed at the rock formations the roads had been "cut through". The history of the rock quarries in the western part of Nemaha County, and we pointed out the many structures through out the county that are still standing with limestone rock, the hard red granite rock, and Dr. Johnson pointed out the many buildings on Peru Campus that were built with the brick made in Peru, many years ago. Another interesting story was a "pickup" stopping us and asking if we needed help-Burgundy van with state license plates on a road that if it kept sprinkling, we would not be heard from again until summer-we assured him we did not need help, but appreciated his concern. The next stop was Michael getting out of the van to take pictures of rock streams and plum thickets and was met by three farm dogs who were happy to keep him very close to the van. When we got to Indian Cave, we had our own personal tour guide with Janice Boden, NCDA board member, who had worked at the cave a number of years, and could tell us the events and highlights of every turn within the park. The end of our story is, after a cool drink at Family Connections and good-byes were said, we noticed the rear tire in an unrespectable "not round" look. A friendly tire repair shop got that taken care of in short order, and as the van headed out of town and the rear window wiper was turned on a huge "plume" of dust said a final good-bye to Nemaha County. Thanks to Paula, Micheal and Tom for a wonderful day to show you Nemaha County.

NCDA board members on TARGET TOUR, Kris Rogge, T.O. Davison, Janice Boden and Mary Kruger.

Johnson, A Good Town


by Joe Smith

Johnson is a community that wants to help anybody in need, and here is your chance to take part. We have good people running town businesses and are there for us. But all our stores; cafes, feed stores, gas station, grocery store too, need community support. Instead of going out of town for supplies why not buy what you can in Johnson? *The White Horse* has been a part of Johnson for decades, so has the café. All the businesses in town need your patronage. They are not asking anybody for a hand-out, just a chance to make it their way, with good food or good service. What if we went the way of a lot of small towns? Johnson is way too nice of a town for that to happen. So support all our businesses. Take your wife or husband out for supper, you might find the food here in town is as good as anywhere and the money helps keep our town healthy. Stop in and fill up with gas and get a pizza for supper. Stop at noon on Wednesday or Sunday at the café and get some really good chicken. You will be happy you did. Let us make our town last so that your kids will want to stick around and grow their families here. Let us make plans to grow our town. Joe Smith


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QUILTING

"Diaries Written with a Needle"

by Devon Adams

The sitting room had a wool rug that covered the center of the floor, with shiny boards showing around the edges, joining the wide, varnished molding that framed the room. The upright piano was a dark hulk in the corner, accompanied by its graceful swivel seat stool that had clear glass balls gripped by brass claw feet. When I was a very small person, I'd lie on the floor and gaze through those glass feet and marvel at the distorted images of the furniture and the windows.

The sliding pocket doors were open during the warm months, connecting the living room to the sitting room. But the wide doorway was often filled with a massive quilting frame that extended into both rooms, leaving only enough room to squeeze past. My grandmother and her friends spent countless days piecing quilts together by hand measuring tiny stitches, keeping lines straight, working from traditional patterns. They used cloth cut from old clothes and curtains and feed sacks and every other source that was available. Each scrap of material had a memory attached to it and as the ladies worked, they wove the fabrics of their lives into keepsakes for their children and grandchildren.

Even as the completion neared for one quilt, these busy women were preparing for the next project by cutting out stacks of precisely measured, geometric shapes. They could envision the finished quilts in their minds, and would sort the fabrics and colors and patterns into categories, so that the future finished product would be a work of art, adhering to the principals of composition, color, line and balance. Each production was unique, never to be duplicated again. Because, though the same patters were used over and over, styles in clothing and fabrics evolved, and even if Grandmother wanted to copy a quilt she'd made when she was twenty-five, she could no longer buy the same materials.

Over time, these useful quilts were actually used, and many of them faded gradually and lost the strength of the weave. They became fragile and easily torn, and some disappeared into the oblivion of rags. One quilt in particular, done in yellow and cream, was wrapped around my sweet Molly, my golden retriever, as I buried her worn-out body by the lilac bush that my grandmother had planted about the same time that she'd made that quilt. Other quilts were saved and preserved in cedar chests, diaries written with a needle, to be read and savored as a valuable inheritance.

These fancy productions of cloth and color are more than the sum of their parts. They are both a remembrance of things past and a prayer for the future.



Quilters, this quilt is the Shop Hop featured pattern in your Shop Hop Bag and is on display at *Needles I* in Auburn. (See *Needles I* advertisement below.) This year's theme is: "50's & 60's".

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Barada Hills



...Of April Foolishness and Springtime Follies

by Vicki Harger

(Dedicated to my country friend Marjorie Kinghorn)

It was one of *those* kinds of days....

One of those glorious spring days that make you feel heady and foolhardy, with a dash of April madness. The afternoon had simmered away to the warmest part of the day, and now the distant hills beckoned me with swaying ripples of grass.

With sunhat on my head and a dachshund at my heels, I set off for the slopes beyond the family farm—not sure where I was going, but confident that I'd know it when I got there. The old trail took me uphill and down—leading me along the path my ancestors trod so many years ago. Past shadowy draws and mysterious ravines.

Past the place of Fear-and- Trepidation....

I'd seen a huge muddy paw-print at this spot, several months ago, and though the track had disappeared in the ensuing rains, nothing could erase the memory of the monstrous paw-print from my mind.

"It's got to be a cougar," my father told me, upon examining the track. "And she's a big one." My father straightened and stared across the timber. "Your uncles say she lives in the thicket just west of here—but not all the time. She circles the timber within a 25 mile radius....So you don't have much to worry about."

Indeed.

I wasn't really worried about the Big One, today. The day was bright and the wind was fresh. There could be no lurking cougars in the ravines—not today.

The little hound and I tramped the winding pathway, heading deeper into the Barada Hills as the sun began its downward slide. Overhead, great arrows of snow geese pointed northward—their wings flickering light and dark, light and dark until they disappeared into the haze of a summer-yet-to-come.

Earth was waiting, heavy with offspring yet unborn: promise of birds and bees and flowers and seeds. The twitter of nesting robins. The scent of sun-toasted soil and waiting fields. On every slope and hilltop could be seen the burgeoning belly of Mother Earth.

I topped a gently mounded hill and came to a stop, listening.

Hidden somewhere in the trees ahead, was the Home Place—a creaky old farmstead which could be heard long before it came into view. Loose tin banging in the breeze, the squeak of ancient hinges, the rush of wind in the walnut trees. I followed the noisy din and soon the ramshackle remains of the Old Home Place emerged from the trees, rising before me like a miniature ghost town.

Only one good barn remained. It stood like a stiff sentinel amongst the tottering, gray-faced buildings. The barn's big door was partly open, letting the inner darkness leak out...dense blackness that looked grim and foreboding.

A shiver zippered my spine.

Cougars don't live in barns, I was sure of that. But this old barn always left me feeling wary. It was full of hidden niches. Cobwebby rafters. Dark musty stalls.

I walked quickly past the sentinel barn and rounded the corner.

Just ahead of me the dachshund paused, ears cocked, eyes bright with anticipation. He stood motionless—seeing what I could not see, hearing what I could not hear. His nose quivered for just a moment, then he sped off, yipping—tail wagging, nose to the ground, zigzagging a cottontail trail through the weeds. His yips receded into the distance and I turned to stare about me at the decrepit buildings.

An old well-pump sat idle, the handle cocked—awaiting a dead owner's return. Broken canning jars from long-gone pantries lay scattered about: Aged stovepipe, corroded from a thousand fires of the past. Wires and hinges and broken tools. They rusted in the dirt where they'd fallen.

I gazed at the scene around me. If I listened hard, I could hear the echo of my great-grandmother's voice on the wind, calling the family to supper. I could hear the ca-rumph, ca-rumph of the well pump, and the bang of my great-grandfather's buckets. The splashing of water. The voices of children in springtime. The echoes of living and loving and laughter....

Life in full motion, now frozen in time....

My thoughts ground to a halt. A movement in the barnyard below had caught my eye. There was the silhouette of a figure against the side of the barn. The form stood motionless, now, as though watching me. Somebody with a broad-brimmed hat and a dark countenance—a phantom figure amid the trees. Startled, I leaned to one side for a better look. The person leaned as well. I straightened and so did the phantom.

I sighed, relieved.

It was just me, my silhouetted image cast by the setting sun. Strange, I thought to myself, there was a strange irony to it all. I stood gazing at my dark shadow, thinking. I, myself, was a reflection of those who had gone before me. Their DNA permeated my genes. I mimicked my ancestors, like my shadow mimicked me.

Deep in thought, I wandered about the homestead, spending the rest of the afternoon shuffling through the broken remnants of my ancestors' past—putting together the puzzle pieces of their lives, puzzle pieces that were my legacy, as well.

At last I grew tired. The little dachshund, too, had grown weary of his pursuits. He rejoined me late in the afternoon, and the two of us sat beside the tumble-down cabin, watching as the sun faded into western oblivion.

The wind had died, and the banging of tin and creaking of hinges was stilled. The old farm sat locked in a silence that transcended time and space. Ghostly shadows crept over the landscape.

A chill ran through me. It was time to go.

I jumped to my feet, suddenly aware that I had a long ways to go before dark. I called the hound and the two of us set off at a good clip—heading into the dimness of the burgeoning twilight.

Topping the hill, I looked over my shoulder.

The homestead had slipped once more into the gloom of

the Past. I gazed back on it for a moment before turning to look toward the distant lights of my Present.

Past, Present and Future all seemed to merge together in the twilight. Perhaps someday, my descendants would come out here, seeking the puzzle pieces of *their* past. Which was really my present. Or was it my future?

I sighed and hurried on toward home.

Weird thoughts were beginning to whirl through my mind as twilight closed in around me. Reality blurred. Crazy took over. With the approach of nightfall, the shadows about me became shapes, and shapes became creatures—creatures that prowled and clawed at the edges of my sanity.

I tried not to see them. Those things out there, unfriendly in the dimness. Lurking bobcats and monster cougars. The dachshund seemed unafraid, but the presence of such a small dog did little to bolster my own courage.

My feet sped faster, and I found myself stumbling and grumbling as I fought my way through the dimness. Almost there, I said to myself. Almost there. The lights of the farmhouse were brightening now. I only had another acre or two to go. Past the pond and the goat pasture. Past the place of Fear-and-Trepidation where the paw-print of that great cat—

My feet slowed, then ground to a halt.

There was something ahead of me, a presence that I could feel. I swallowed hard. It wasn't 'til this moment that I realized I'd been abandoned by the dachshund. I could hear the sudden rise of his Cottontail-yips in the timber behind me. I was on my own.

I stared at the weeds just ahead. Something was moving in there. My heart leaped and my mind raced. In the dimness I could see eyes, yellow, feline eyes.

With heart pounding, I strained to see past the eyes, to gauge the size of this cougar.

Cougar?

I squinted through the dimness. If it was a cougar, it couldn't be the Big One. The breadth between its eyes was too narrow. Could it be the Big One's cub? No. The coloring didn't seem right, the feline was too white-looking. Too small, too spotted.

"Spot!" I yelled, "You dumb cat!" The barn cat advanced slowly, slipping out of the weeds. He came and rubbed himself against my leg. "You silly thing!"

Pushing the cat aside, I hurried on through the dimness toward the house. I'd had just about enough Springtime adventure for one day. Enough of puzzle pieces from the past. Enough of springtime madness. This business of wandering through the dark hills at night with the Big One lurking out there was pure insanity. April follies and foolishness, indeed!

I hastened on toward the farmhouse, not stopping 'til I'd gotten inside. I shut the door behind me and leaned my back against it, breathing hard.

This April fool was lucky, just lucky to be alive.

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LILIES OF THE FIELD

by Frieda Burston

One of the nice things about a small town newspaper is that you don't usually line the litter box with it as soon as you've read it; you let it hang around for a few days while you think about the things you read.

Often, what you think about is only connected to what you've read by a thin thread, but that thread clings to another thread, and pretty soon you've got a whole fabric in your head. Bea's Flower Buzz about the White Lily led from one thought to another, and ended up with my thinking about how language changes.

I was sitting in third grade in Missouri in Bible-Reading days, when I first heard the verse that Bea quoted, "Consider the lilies of the field—" Like everyone else, I could imagine fields of white flowers blowing in the wind. And then years later, when I was sitting in my kitchen with friends in Israel, I learned that the quotation wasn't about lilies—and the flowers in the fields weren't white as I had pictured them, anyhow.

Language changes faster than styles in underwear. The basic thing about those flowers was that they weren't planted, they just grew. The poet wanted to point out that nobody took care of them, they just grew. They were not a crop, yet they predictably came up every year. And they're still doing it—.

Language changes. The men who translated from the Hebrew to the Greek to the English, were men of the cloister, not of the field. During the days when that was written, the word used—"shoh-shahn-ote" was not the name of one lily, but a generic term, "flower." The men who wrote it down apparently were city men and didn't know the names of country things. They wrote in general terms—"Consider the flowers of the fields__"

Nobody sows them. Of course not; the rains bring them out of the ground. Nobody in his right mind goes around putting his back into crops you can't make anything out of. God wouldn't give man a brain and then tell him to sow flowers before he put in the barley after Passover. So God provides for them.

Today a shoshana is a rose. But whole fields of roses don't rise out of the ground by themselves when Spring invites them out, so the quotation can't be about roses. Nor can it be about the white lily, which spreads slowly by one bulb growing from another, and a whole field of them is more like spilled cream than like Solomon's glory.

What my Israeli friends believe is that those flowers of the field were the Coronel—a small red poppy that pops up everywhere. The wind blows its seeds from the mountains to the seashore. It comes up before the end of winter. When the cold first begins to draw back, the little red poppy shows its green leaves. In a week or two, when the spring hasn't even settled in, the fields are greened over and the red begins to blush the ground. Like the mountains in California, the land begins to look as if someone got on top and threw buckets of paint over the ground everywhere.

Suddenly when you walk to town, you see coronels everywhere—in the vacant lots, in the cracks between sidewalk and curb, between the drainpipes and the walls, in the carefully manicured little pieces of grass in front of the city hall. We're not talking just fields here, we're talking anyplace there's a spare inch of dirt where the wind might have floated a seed. A glowing, blowing red, lights up the whole town, skyscrapers and all.

And then, three weeks later, there's nothing to show that Solomon in all his glory never looked as glorious. The Biblical poet chose to use this small worthless flower to immortalize an idea; that you don't have to be rich or successful or impressive to help make the world a beautiful place. You just have to bloom where you find yourself, wherever you were planted. Open your petals and let your color shine.

Too bad that the poet, and the scribes who came after him, didn't ask women what the name of that red stuff was that comes up every spring by itself. It wouldn't have hurt anything if the Bible had said, "Consider the poppies of the field, neither do they—" and millions of school children wouldn't have grown up seeing fields of white lilies swaying away to the horizon.

But that's language for you. Girls have been named Rose or Lily for centuries with the idea that this was what Shoshana meant back then. Would they have been named Poppy, if parents knew what those flowers were, that came up from chance-blown seeds every Spring?

Hmmm.....chance-blown....maybe Poppy might have been more appropriate for a baby name, in those days. Language has a way of reflecting the times it's used in....

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Deer Hunting Trip

by Joe Smith

Back when I was in High School, way back when, a friend and I went deer hunting west of Artesia, New Mexico. His name was James Stevens. We loaded up our hunting gear, sleeping bags, and all our cooking gear. We went to a ranch owned by a friend of my dad's. His name was Munn Haven. He had a ranch near Weed, New Mexico. He also had two wild boys about my age. We got there before dark and made camp a ways from the house, back in the trees. It was a couple of days before season opened anyway. In November in the mountains it gets cold at about 4500 ft. elevation. James and I had supper and were sitting by the fire when Munn's boys came to our camp and shot the bull with us. One of them threw a hand full of 22 shorts in the fire and we all scattered fast. Sparks and casings were flying everywhere. Those idiots were about to bust a gut laughing. It was rather amusing after we put out the fires in our bed rolls. At least they got a big kick out of it. It made a mess out of our camp though.

The next morning I went with one of the boys on horseback to get some more horses, as we were going to hunt on horseback. We went over east of the headquarters, rounded up some horses, and put them in the corral. The Haven boy roped one of them and hung him a little deep, right in the shoulder area. The horse came by me first and then here came the Haven boy flying through the air. But he held on and finally got the horse stopped. This was the one I was to ride. The whole group was mustangs that had been caught in the mountains nearby. The one I was to ride had a scar right under the mane, just ahead of the shoulders. They would shoot the wild horses like that to knock them down so they could catch them. Surprisingly once they are caught, they made good cow horses. We saddled up a couple of the horses and led some back to the ranch for the next day's hunt. We got back to camp, fed the horses, and left them in the corral. The next morning we four boys and the dad headed out to find some deer. We rode with Mr. Haven in the canyon and the four of us spread out on the sides of the canyon. It was probably a half-mile wide with a lot of trees and some bare spots. We did jump some deer, but they were a long ways off. Needless to say, you've never lived 'til you try shooting a rifle from a horse that won't stand still. It is a wonder we didn't get bucked off. We headed back down the canyon and stopped near the fork in the trail and Munn saw a porcupine in a pine tree. The sun was behind him and he looked like a golden ball up there. Munn said, "See if your gun is shooting straight." I took a shot at the Porcupine and knocked him out of the tree with one shot at probably 300 yards, and stuck the rifle back in the saddle scabbard, like I did it every day.

We went over that after noon to a different area and hunted on foot. While walking in those rocks I fell and bent the sight on my rifle. James and I were walking together and we saw two big bucks way down on the flat a good quarter mile away, running flat out. That is when I noticed my sight was bent flat. So I just used the end of the barrel, led him a little and pulled the trigger. The big buck did a flip and got up with only one horn left and keep running. I must of hit one of his antlers dead center. That was a shot to remember but I still didn't get the deer. Been a long time ago, but I think we did take one deer home with us anyway. Who shot it I can't remember, but it was a fun trip for sure, a little wild but still fun. I never saw Munn and his boys again. Joe Smith

Reincarnation & Spirit Guides

by Joe Smith

There are many ideas from different religions as to what happens when we die. Some say we come back as another person later in life, and some believe that this time is it, dust to dust. I tried to look up on the internet about what the difference was. That was a waste of time, all I found was personal beliefs. So I guess I will just give you mine.

Do we come back? If so, how do we come back? As a Brahma cow? Or some other animal? Now, this is far-out, as most of my stuff is, but one way to find out is to have a past-life regression by a 'certified' person that is good at that. I had heard about this work for some time, and one time in Dallas met a lady who was such a person. She offered to do a past-life regression on me. It was very fascinating as to the whole process and how they do it and so-forth. I won't go into that now, as that is a story in itself.

What brought this up was that I always wanted to learn to play the guitar. I told my wife that on the next round, I want to be able to play and sing western type songs. She said, "I think that this will be my last trip down here; I will go on up the ladder from here." So she and I believe that there is a phase you have to go through before you are ready for the next step in God's plan.

Then we come to the problem of Spirit Guides. What are they? Do we all have them? My idea on that is that is one more phase we go through. A Spirit Guide is a deceased human that didn't quite get it right the last time down here, and heaven sent him back to help somebody else and maybe himself. I don't have any idea what the church would say about this. It's just my opinion. Everybody has their own idea about Spirit Guides, and they're just as good as mine. I guess we will have to wait 'til we pass over to find out.

The story, "Harve Bodine", I wrote was about past lives, mine and a friend in Arizona. I'm trying to get someone to print it. I won't hold my breath though. It is amazing the memories that show up of an apparent past life.

There have been many documented stories of past lives; Bridey Murphy was one of them. We walked into an old hotel to get one of their famous sweet rolls and I told Marta, "Man, I've been here before." There had been 36 men killed in the hotel. That is a whole other story, but for right now, ask yourself how you feel about coming back as another person; a new baby. Or do you just turn to dust, or maybe a cow? It is indeed a deep subject which we can't do anything about anyway. So just live your life to its fullest. Who knows what lies on the other side of the veil? Joe Smith

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Country

Scenes



This Courthouse in Marysville, Kansas is a striking landmark, and was my first sighting as I drove into town.



Marysville, Kansas, the “Black Squirrel” city, impressed me in a way that all small towns want to impress visitors; with its storefronts, brick streets, and many interesting shops open for business.



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Canada Geese on Verdon Lake...migrating, or returning home?

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Whisler's Hunting & Fishing Report

by Josh Whisler
(Photo provided by Author)



Fishing:

No river fishing yet but it's just around the corner. March was a crazy month, with very cold days one week only to be followed by record breaking temperatures the following week. With the sudden heat, up came the flood waters due to the snow melt run-off. This compounded by the ground still having frost didn't allow much water to soak in so the run-off is pretty significant. Areas north of here received over a foot of snow the last go-around, and when it melts it all seems to come our way. The river is presently at flood stage and is full from bank to bank. There is good and bad about every thing the river does. The good is that the Spring snow-melt cleans a lot of the brush and debris (tree limbs, grass, etc.) off the river's banks and sand bars. It also cleans creeks and streams out and with this water comes bait for the fish in the river. Thus the saying, "Fish bite better on the River Rise". But high waters also make a mess trying to get to the river and it's hard to get a boat in. So what is there to do? It's time to hit the ponds and lakes. With the high temps and the winds it didn't take long to get the 12 inches of ice off the area ponds and lakes. It's time to throw a minnow on and catch some Crappie. Several fishermen have been having luck. But if you have ever fished for Crappie you know that they are a little touchy when they are going to bite. When I say "when they are going to bite" I mean the time of day. So this means you have stay with it because when they start to hit, the feeding frenzy only goes on for an hour or so and, as fast as it starts, it's over. The whole time you are reeling in, removing fish, and re-baiting as fast as you can so you can get as many as you can while they are hitting. That little burst of action keeps the crappie fishermen coming back. Plus they eat pretty good too. Crappie are considered panfish and Limits are 30 bag (on the stringer) and possession 60 (in the freezer).

Hunting:

2007 Spring Turkey – Starting January 10th through the end of season, you can purchase your statewide Spring turkey season tag. There are unlimited permits (if you want one —buy one). The permit is the same as in the past – one male (Tom) or bearded hen per permit. However, you can purchase up to three permits (at one time if you wish). "What's up with that," you say? One thing is you can get bow and shotgun permits. The second thing is you can keep hunting after you get one. The second option seems more logical to me. You scout them out - you find them – you call one in – and you bag one. Your season is over. Did you like it? Do you want some more? Whip out another permit and go again. Sounds fun to me! I tell you another thing that has happened to me and others have stated the same thing. Two toms come in to your decoy. Now you can try to bag them both. Permits can be obtained from now through May 20th over the counter or online.

Seasons start as follows:

Archery – March 25th

Shotgun — April 14th

Spring has sprung. I told you hunting wouldn't be suspended for long. Deer season seems like just yesterday and now it's Turkey Season. Let's not forget about getting our fishing poles ready for a little Spring fishing. Ready or not, Spring is here. You need to get out there and get yourself some. Remember, I'm not an expert but I have my share of luck. I wonder if the experts are having any luck today? So until next time, "Happy Hunting & Fishing."

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This month's fishing picture shows Joe Whisler with Crappie taken through the ice at a local sand pit.

Sept. 9, 1857 to Sept. 9, 2007

Peru is having a birthday - 150 years old! The town will be acknowledging its birthday through activities, events, and the sharing of its history throughout the next few months.

The following is taken from Ernest Longfellow's book *Across the Wide Missouri, Peru, Nebraska, 1854-1991*.

"Six families, all from Peru, Illinois, and all more or less related, were the Swans, Mellicks, Combs, Horns, Halls, and Tates." They settled on Sonora Island, Missouri, an island in the Missouri River, which no longer exists.

"Sonora was incorporated in 1855. The court appointed William S. Horn, Thomas McAdams, Wilson Swan, J.D. York, and Stephen Smith as trustees of the town."

Longfellow speculated that, after a time, these families "crossed the river to take up land in the Peru area."

"Across the Missouri River, west of Sonora, was what seems to have been an Indian trading post run by Henry (Hen) Martin, a relative of the Fidler family. I have never been able to pinpoint the exact location of the trading post, but it was probably on Cemetery Hill.

Very little is known of the history of Mt. Vernon. The town built around the trading post, but it was founded in 1855 by H.C. Carpenter, Henry Sessions Jr., J.B. Gridley, and Henry McKenny.

It was a good location for an Indian trading post on top of the bluff with a view up and down the river for many miles. Being atop the bluff, however, was a drawback, for all goods came by steamboat and were carted up a steep road. When the population increased, the job became too much. Some merchants had already started stores...nearer the river.

The original survey of Peru was made by W.H. Dunbar on March 11, 1857, and entered in the Land Office [in Brownville, Neb.] on Sept. 9, 1857. The original proprietors were S.A. Chambers, R.W. Frame, Jacob Norfinger, and S.F. Nuckolls. Daniel Saunders was the first postmaster, and [then] D.C. Cole."

Imagine what the area must have been like at that time. Hills and valleys were heavily wooded. The untamed Missouri River hugged the bluffs around to Peru and on northwest, but its meandering ways probably produced extensive wetlands where farmable ground now exists. Indians lived in the area. Few primitive roads would have existed. Civil authority was probably in its infancy.

LOOKING FOR LEAVES FROM PERU'S FAMILY TREE

Peru, Nebraska, will be celebrating 150 years of its history in the next few months. A portion of that celebration will include recognition of Peru's founding families and their contributions to its development.

According to "Andreas' History of the State of Nebraska – Nemaha Co. Part 11," early settlers were identified as: S.A. Chambers, R.W. Frame, Jacob Norffinger, Peru's "original proprietors"; S.F. Nuckolls; William Compton, William Tate, R.W. Frame, W.H. Denman, John Patterson (druggist), John W. Hall, Harman Rhay, D.C. Cole, Samuel Pettit, and Alfred Medley, John C. Wyne (blacksmiths); Methodist clergymen Redick Horn, J.W. Hall, Hugh Doyle, and W.S. Horn; Mr. Still (ferryman); children Mary and Sarah Medley (Mrs. Baler); Lewis Reade, John McNown (Justices of the Peace); Mr. Manktello (first school teacher); W.F. Ball (first mayor); Lyford, Peery & Brother (storehouse keepers); Charles Gaede (tavern keeper); Majors & Glasgow, Burdick & Etlinger, G.A. Brown (merchants); J.W. Bliss (notary); Moses Stanley (wagon maker); Neuhemery & Wyatt (carpenters); Dr. Russell Peery (physician); George K. Pettit

Listed as early settlers of the town of Mt. Vernon were: founders, H.C. Carpenter, Henry Sessions Jr., J.B. Gridley, and Henry McKenny, plus J.E. Haycook (postmaster)

If you are a "leaf" on one of these family trees and would like to share information about your family, please contact Bea Patterson at 872-7745 or "bp15624@alltel.net." She is interested in coordinating pioneer family displays at the Peru Museum, as space allows. Contact Bea to get the particulars.

PERU MAKES CENTS



by Robert "Bob" Lewellen

For a "cents" of Peru's history, just take the coins from your pocket and look at them.

Thomas Jefferson on the nickel sent Lewis and Clark to explore our area. They camped across the river and upstream from where Peru is now. George Washington, on the quarter, lived at Mount Vernon, which gave its name to our twin city, present cemetery, and the original name of the college.

Abraham Lincoln, on the penny, as a young man, went up the Missouri River from St. Joseph to Council Bluffs on a steamboat and might have docked at Peru.

On some other coins, which are not as likely in your pocket, we find more Peru history. Eisenhower, on the silver dollar, appointed two Peru-born Brownells to his cabinet — one was Attorney General and his brother was head of Education. On other one-dollar coins, we find Sacaguea, who is believed to have gone to St. Louis some years after she guided Lewis and Clark and would have passed our location. Some other historians say she did not travel to St. Louis. On another dollar coin is Susan B. Anthony who spent three days on our campus visiting classes according to the writings of Louis Mears.

Happy 150th birthday, Peru!
We know we can put our money on you.

HOMETOWN HEROES

by Robert "Bob" Lewellen

The history of Peru, Neb., is an unusually rich history for a small town. Connections exist to many events of opening the frontier, of education, and of people of humble beginnings making noteworthy contributions.

The list of Peruvians in that regard goes on and on. Naming a few and omitting many, the list includes: Henry H. Bagg, artist; Herbert Brownell, Jr., author of the 25th Amendment; Max Mathews, inventor of digital music; E.P. Conkle, author and playwright; James W. Crabtree, a founder of the National Education Association; W.B. Edmonds, an ambassador to South Africa; Martin Stowell, conductor of the underground railroad, Marlen Downey, a Shell Oil executive; Mary McConnaughey, a world champion arm wrestler; Edison Pettit, a world famous astronomer at Palomar Observatory.

Most of the above accomplishments happened away from Peru. T.J. Majors, after being a colonel in the Civil War, helped establish PSC. Mary McConnaughey was named Peru Citizen of the Year while still a girl.

Can you be a hero in your home town?

Diary of an Unemployed Housewife

By Merri Johnson

It must be spring: I've got the urge to work in the yard and change things up a bit inside the house as well. Fittingly, I indulged in both on the first day of spring this year. For those of you who don't pay attention to the calendar, the first day of spring – the Spring Equinox – was March 20. I typically observe the day by balancing an egg on my kitchen countertop. If you've been reading my column for the past two years, you know all about that.

But this year, I was up and on my way to my son's house in St. Joe at 7:30 a.m.. He and a friend purchased an older house that they are fixing up for resale, and I offered to help get the yard in shape. Plus, I needed to pick up a new dining set that my husband and I had purchased from a furniture store there.

I arrived in St. Joe at 8:45. After loading the furniture and parking my truck securely in my son's garage, we headed to the job site with rakes and various other lawn tools in tow. The plan was for my daughter-in-law and me to rake leaves while the men tore down a sagging has-been privacy fence and cleaned up construction debris. My son's partner is basically in charge of the house renovations and seems to be fairly well on top of that; but he's a little naïve about yard work.

He first suggested that we just push all the leaves into a large pile by the alley. He was sure the trash hauler would be perfectly happy to gather up the loose leaves along with the rest of the refuse.

I was just as sure that the hauler *wouldn't* see it that way. Even if the hauler were a glutton for punishment, there was no guarantee that the wind wouldn't just redeposit the leaves on the lawn before he got there. The only bags on site were a few household trash can liners, so a run to the store was in order. One box of 14 large bags and another box of household bags were acquired. *Probably not going to be enough.*

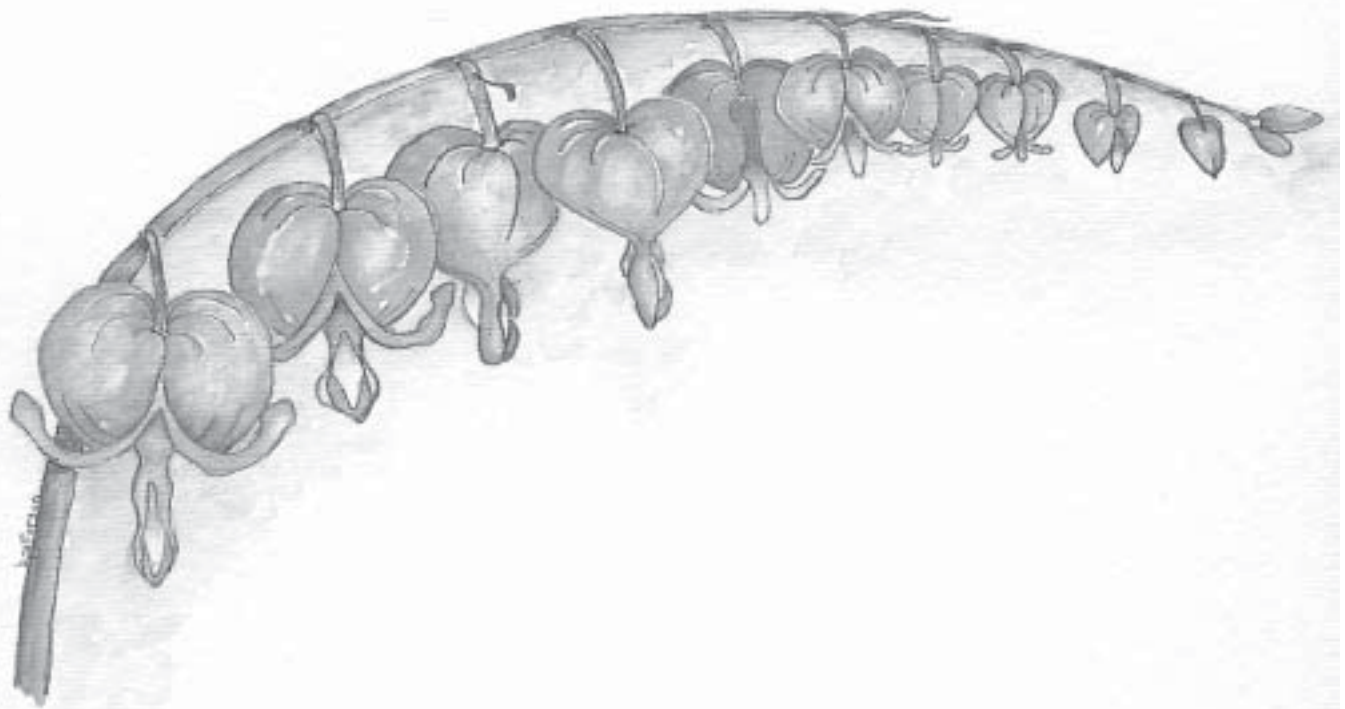
Inside of two hours, my daughter-in-law and I had filled all the bags, and we weren't half done yet. The depth of the leaves blown in against the woven wire property line fence was deceiving. Based on the degree of disintegration of the bottom of the pile, I surmised that there were at least two years' worth packed along that fence. An interested next-door neighbor walked over and confirmed that the lawn hadn't been raked for four years! He also noted that recent tenants had owned Rottweilers that they kept tied in the yard. That would explain the lack of grass.

We eventually filled over 40 large leaf bags, to the amazement of my son's partner, and the guys were able to power rake and seed the majority of the lawn just in time for show-ers to start. Great timing for yard work.

Not so great for hauling furniture 70 miles in an open pickup. Hmmm. What to do. The furniture was all wrapped in heavy plastic, but I was a little nervous about risking water damage, not to mention my husband's ire. We checked the weather radar on my son's computer and it looked like I could drive out of the showers, so I decided to make a run for it. The showers reached a little farther north than I was hoping for, but my luck – and the plastic wrapping – held.

The new dining room furniture looks great. But our old set is really cluttering up the place. So, if you know anyone in the market for a large, solid oak table and four chairs, make me an offer. That set has to go, and soon.

Bea's Flower Buzz



"Beautious Bleeding-Hearts"

by Bea Patterson

Country Gardeners, are you hearing the song of spring? Do you hear the sound...

of tender green stems pushing up through brittle dry leaves,
of joyous robins and cardinals warbling in thick-tipped trees,
of grasses exercising their collective green muscles,
of tree bundles straining against their tissue paper wrappings,
of fuzzy brown squirrels cavorting up, down, and around raspy barked trees
of crocus and daffodils timidly waving pastel petals in time with the breeze,
of the splashing cool, rejuvenating rain washing away winter?

You will as you walk around your garden to see what is popping up. What made it to spring this year? What's probably winter-killed? Thrills and heartbreak (especially if it cost 50 bucks). I'm really rooting for my new-last-fall witch hazel.

I watch anxiously for one of my favorite spring treasures, the gracefully arching bleeding-heart. So many young people I talked with are not familiar with bleeding-hearts, so I decided to feature these beautiful flowers for an April topic.

While we might think of bleeding-hearts as old-fashioned flowers, they are not native to America. They were smuggled out of China over 150 years ago and subsequently imported. That makes them relatively new to the American garden.

Pedigree: (Family) Fumariaceae (foo-mar-ee-ay-see-ay), (Genus) *Dicentra*, (*species*) *spectabilis*
Another common name is "lady-in-the-bath." Turn the bloom upside down, and gently press it open. You will find a "lady in a bathtub."

They have some native American cousins: "Dutchman's Breeches," one of my favorite spring flowers found in the timbre at home in Kansas; a much smaller relative "Squirrel Corn." "Squirrel Corn" has blooms more similar to bleeding-hearts but grow from a mass of little bulblets, scattered and shaped like little grains of corn.

We also have now the delightful Fumariaceae *Dicentra eximia* (eis-IM-mee-uh) or fringed bleeding-heart. Blooms are not as striking, but they bloom freely all summer, and their foliage stays attractive.

Description: perennial; all parts of plant are poisonous if ingested; heart-shaped blooms with two slender and elongated inside petals "bleeding" to down to cover pistil and anthers; colors range from pink to near white and ferny-like foliage

Attributes: attract hummingbirds; excellent cut flowers; attractive textural element

Growing conditions: light shade; humus rich, slightly moist but well-drained soil; hardy zones 2 – 9

Propagation: divide rhizomes in fall; cuttings from roots; collected seeds (dry, ripened seeds directly sown on ground in the fall). My first successful starts came from my friend (and former business partner) Betsy Reed, whose bleeding-hearts provide an awesome display around her bed-and-breakfast.

Tips: Remove faded flowers to increase re-bloom. Pair with thick, solid-leafed, shorter plants in front, such as lilies-of-the-valley or "pinks."



I'll close with **two survival tips**. #1. We are **not** in gardening-ready condition (too much couch gardening this winter). Take it easy getting started; **PACE** yourself! Start by doing a warm-up around the yard twice, or gradually get into practicing your bending, stretching, pushing, and reaching, and keep it balanced; if you stretch forward, then stretch backward. Focus on your targeted gardening activity. ("If it hurts, don't do it; honor your body.") Take time to cool down (under the shade of a tree with a glass of water, imagining your yard in a-h-h-h weedless bloom). And remember, Advil is our friend. (Terry, are you following me here?)

Tip #2: Garden smarter this year to save yourself steps, time, energy, and money. Now **good luck**, out there! Remember, we're all in this together ☺.

Bea Patterson
bp15624@alltel.net

Poetry, etc.

CEDAR LANE

by Devon Adams

Follow the row of old cedars,
each one twisted and honed
by the wind, until they stand
like a line of old men waiting
for tomorrow in the morning.
Use my camera's eye to record
their particular attitude
on this day of fog and damp,
when the battered branches hold
tiny drops of water waiting
to fall into soggy grass.
Save the image of the line
that stands against the wall of fog.
Remember with sharp-cut detail
the silhouettes that touch each other,
leaving eloquent negative spaces.
Breathe the fragrance of cedar oil crushed by my boots
as I step on the fallen branches.
Watch for bird nests thrown down
by the wind, displaced forever
from their sheltered niches.
Pick up and save the tiny cradles
woven from horsehair by finches.
Say a prayer for the babies that
blew all the way to heaven.
Walk back down the lane
beside the ghost of the farmer
who planted these trees,
counting steps between each sprout,
setting them into the soil.
Thank him for the beauty
that he knew would last beyond
the days he owned this farm.



Could this be the Dove of which Devon writes?

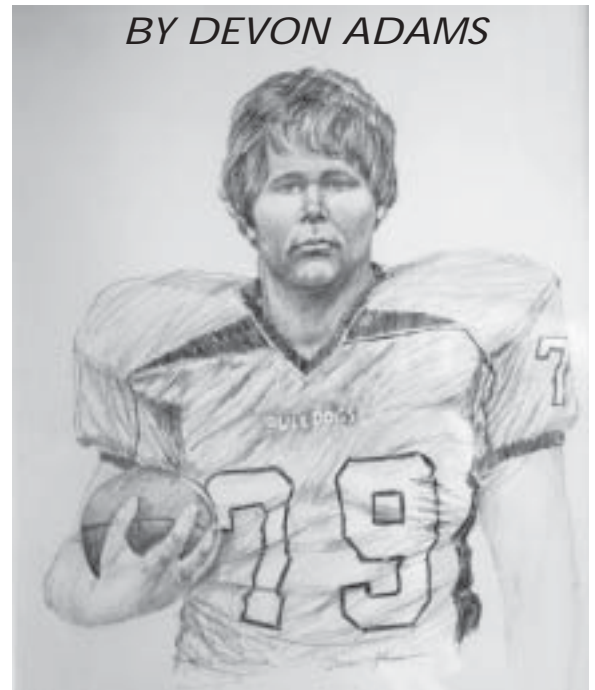
THE PRAYER OF THE TURTLE DOVE

by Devon Adams

Drive past the old farmstead, with the fading barn, sagging fences and tired old trees, and coast down the steep hill that falls west toward the creek. Stop beside the bridge and walk across the echoing planks that are warped and worn. Look down to the flowing, murky water that speaks its own garbled words, as it hurries over rocks and fallen trees. There are marks written in the muddy banks from countless wild feet. Delicate handprints are stamped beside rabbit punches made in threes. Birds have stitched their seams around the deep indentations made from the split hooves of white-tails. Coyotes left scent that mingles with the musk of foxes and colors the air over their braided tracks. Here and there are patches of feathers, evidence of successful hunts. Listen to the symphony playing in the trees, accented with the woodpecker drums and the piccolo of finches, the melody carried by cardinals and robins, and arias sung by orioles. The prayer of the turtle dove reminds us not to hurry past today, because tomorrow is an illusion that we may never see.

PENCIL PORTRAITS

BY DEVON ADAMS



Artist Devon Adams has been writing poetry and essays for *Your Country Neighbor* for several years, and now you can have **your portrait** or portraits of your children, grandchildren, or pets drawn by this talented artist. Order your personal portrait by calling 402-209-9377. Or mail your photograph(s) and your check for the applicable amount as shown in the price list below.

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The Face of Drought

A Farm Report from Western Nebraska

by Karen Ott

A week ago Saturday it rained all day--a half-inch here at home, other areas received a little more. It was a gorgeous day; even the grey sky was easy on the eyes. The rest of the week alternated between summer-warm and spring-cool; lilacs budded, crab apple trees shot out green leaves, flashy jonquils blossomed vibrant yellow. It was spring at its best.

On Wednesday afternoon I scrubbed the front porch, put the snow shovel away for the year, mowed the lawn, staked delphinium plants, and gathered some fresh alfalfa leaves for the hens because even chickens deserve a treat every once in a while. Earlier that day the radio's meteorologist had warned our area to be on the lookout for severe thunderstorms, and indeed most of the day the bright blue sky was crisscrossed with fast moving banks of clouds that looked awesome but moved east with devilishly evil intent. By late afternoon the clouds were spawning tornadoes across America's midsection and the local forecast had changed to rain mixed with snow--possibly an inch accumulation on the grassy areas by morning.

Today, Thursday, I retrieved the snow shovel and spent an hour scooping eight inches of heavy wet snow from the sidewalk and porch. The jonquils are smashed flatter than a pancake and this morning after the hens stepped out into snow up to their armpits they did an abrupt about-face and spent the day indoors. They're not much for snow sports.

It's just after six pm and it's been snowing all day; the spruce trees droop, their boughs burdened by God's unexpected bounty, the river bottom hides behind a veil of swirling winter white, and the fields which yesterday smelled of Spring look like Christmas.

The Wyoming watersheds are socked in under a slow moving Spring storm, the sort we used to have--the kind which drops feet of snow, not piddling inches. Isn't life grand!

The storm's downside is its effect on our spring calves. Backs to the wind the poor little things stand hunched against the cold and wet, heads hanging, eyes narrowed. The wind, which is considerable, drives each herd to the southeast, where the mamas and babies drift like the wind-driven snow against whatever obstacle they meet: fence corner, building, tree row. The only thing keeping those babies alive is their determination to live, and their mother's warm milk.

Calving duty will be extra-onerous tonight; white-out conditions, and the fact the ground under the snow is pure unadulterated mud should make for some exciting night driving.

No beets planted yet....although I'm sure there are more than a few farmers kicking themselves for not planting on Monday or Tuesday. The first thing Dale said this morning when he saw the snow was "I wish I had a field of beets in the ground." Snow, as opposed to rain, blankets the soil and melts in slowly...the surface stays soft and seedling emergence is uniform and effortless. On the other hand a 'splasher' rain packs the soil, which turns to a concrete crust once the sun comes out. Ask a farmer to describe a 'crust' and I guarantee his answer won't be "yeasty, tasty and good with butter."

We're looking for more snow tomorrow, at least until noon. Then we'll see; by Sunday we're supposed to be in the sixties.

By Monday I might hang the snow shovel back in the shop.....but then again maybe not.

After all....it is Nebraska.

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BEING INDISPENSABLE

Ursula Waln, N.D.

Some people bend over backward to meet other people's needs, often sacrificing their own needs to do so. They let other people take advantage of them, and actually encourage this, so that ultimately others come to rely on them, to depend on them. Sound familiar? Caretakers quite appropriately do this for young children and others who cannot care for themselves. As children grow and become more capable of meeting their own needs, the normal parental response is to gradually stop doing that which is no longer needed and to encourage the development of independence. In relationships between people who are – or should be – capable of taking care of themselves, a tendency by one person to encourage unnecessary dependency in the other can be unhealthy for both people.

If you or someone you know is so helpful as to become indispensable, have you ever paused to wonder why? Often the need to be needed is rooted in low self-esteem. Being necessary provides a sense of self-worth. A fear of rejection and/or abandonment goes hand in glove with low self-esteem. If we look to other people's opinions of us – or need of us – to measure our own worth as human beings, then the prospect of rejection

threatens to leave us feeling worthless. Because people are less likely to reject or abandon a person upon whom they are dependent, being indispensable provides a sense of security. (When the propensity to help too much is coupled with another's addictive behavior, we call it codependency.)

A certain amount of interdependency in relationships is natural and healthy. An equitable division of responsibilities based upon mutual agreement, for example, can allow each person to contribute to the relationship according to his or her strengths. A fair division of labor can improve efficiency in the day-to-day functioning of a household. Sharing of confidences and mutual emotional reinforcement in a close relationship can create healthy emotional interdependency. In a healthy adult relationship, each person feels whole within him or herself and – though perhaps loath to do so – knows that he or she can survive without the other person.

Too much one-sided dependency in a relationship generally leads to problems. The interpersonal boundaries that maintain dignity and respect within a relationship become strained. Typically, even though the overly supportive person created and encouraged the situation through his or her own actions, over time he or she begins to feel used, taken for

granted. In the beginning, there were probably signs of approval that reinforced the supportive behavior, but eventually the personal sacrifice goes unappreciated (it may not even be recognized), and this makes the giver feel undervalued and resentful. On the other side of the equation, being kept in a position of dependency is disempowering. The receiver loses a certain amount of autonomy and may become resentful of the associated helplessness, whether real or implied.

Resentment that goes unexpressed will manifest in other ways, perhaps as irritability, a tendency to be faultfinding, depression, or seemingly unrelated outbursts. If deeply suppressed, these emotions may lead to clumsiness, overeating, substance abuse, or other self-destructive behaviors. Or, they may manifest as physical illnesses (due to the effects of chronic stress on the body).

To be truly healthy, we must have healthy relationships. This requires that we be able to establish and maintain clear and fair interpersonal boundaries. And, this requires that we have a high enough opinion of ourselves to believe that we are worthy of being loved without having to make unnecessary personal sacrifices.

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