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Country Neighbor



August 2005

YOUR WINDOW WITH A COUNTRY VIEW



A Monthly Magazine About the Rural Midwest



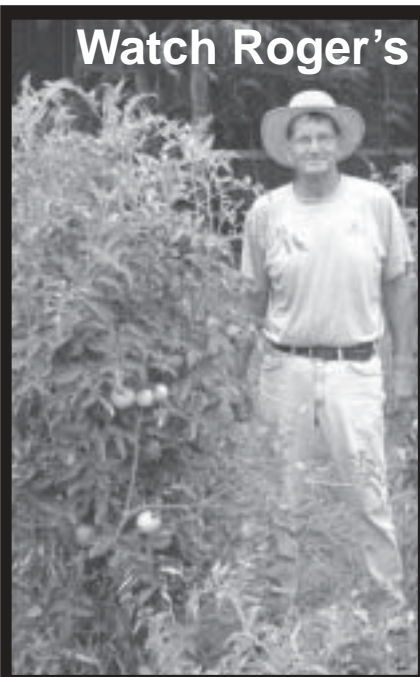
Roadside wildflowers add pleasure to a country drive.

Volume Five, Number Eight

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August 2005



Watch Roger's Garden Grow!

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See Roger's Garden at www.yourcountryneighbor.com
Click on "Nemaha Gardens"



Dragonfly basking near an Iowa lake.

August is about...

August is the fourth anniversary of *Your Country Neighbor*, and so begins the fifth year of this publication. The first issue was just twelve pages, and gasoline was less than a dollar per gallon. Since then we've added parts of Iowa and Missouri to *Your Country Neighbor* delivery territory, plus many more towns in Southeast Nebraska!

An original premise was that too often we take our rural life-style for granted. That premise remains a motivation for this publication. Some believe the rural life-style is disappearing, but I hope it's only changing for the better, leaving more memories to cherish with each passing year.

This month Devon's poetry continues to pour in and Josh is catching more catfish than ever. Ann's recipe column is new to *Your Country Neighbor* this year, and well received. Roger's "Nemaha Gardens" is producing tomatoes and more for sale at the Farmers Market in Auburn, and the Neighborhood Closet continues to provide a 50% storewide discount to readers of *Your Country Neighbor*, (find your '50% off' coupon on the back page).

Brownville seems to be the envy of most towns, both as a tourist attraction and in the way they get things done. Now there is a cooking school and catering service! See pages 6 and 7 for what's going on in Brownville.

And Debra Hall has written a new book! Read the review on page 12.

Plus, this month *Your Country Neighbor* is testing the waters in Northeast Kansas with a separate edition delivered to and around the communities of Hiawatha, Sabetha, and Seneca.

My writers and myself never tire of the compliments we receive from you, our reading audience. Thank you, and have a great month!

Your

COUNTRY NEIGHBOR

Editor and Publisher: Stephen Hassler

The following people helped make this issue possible:

Devon Adams
Frieda Burston
Debra Hall
Merri Johnson
Lila Meyerkorth
Karen Ott
Joe Smith
Josh Whisler
Students at S.E. Consolidated
Ann Yates

Thank you!

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at:

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(capital letters optional)

Your Country Neighbor

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A Summertime Visit to Kansas



Historic Building in Seneca



Downtown Hiawatha



Kansas has its low maintenance country roads.



Covered Bridge on the edge of town in Sabetha.



Still standing against the wind.



Now part of Seneca's Library, this former church is one of the oldest buildings in Kansas.

The Avenue Grill Restaurant Expands into Food Manufacturing Business and More

Cindy and BJ Monson have owned and operated the Avenue Grill restaurant in Auburn, Nebraska for several years. The most popular menu items include meats grilled with their own customer favorite barbeque sauce. Encouraged by requests from restaurant patrons, the Monsons began to explore the idea of bottling and marketing the sauce.

The newly formed company, **Monson Family Foods** recently introduced *Two Bridges BBQ Sauce*. Cindy explained, "The product is named after a local landmark near our family farm. We wanted the company and product names to create a strong brand and tie back to our family heritage."

The barbeque sauce will be sold from the restaurant and specialty food stores throughout the state. The Monson's knowledge of the specialty food industry and their determination will help them in their quest to make this new business venture a success.

Another business venture the couple are pursuing is a "make ahead" meal service called **The Evening Express**. In less than two hours customers assemble twelve entrees that they take home and freeze and cook as they need them. "It is a great convenience for anyone who is busy and doesn't have the time to make a homemade dinner," says Amy Kroll, sister of Cindy and partner with **The Evening Express**. All of the ingredients are prepared for you to assemble, allowing everyone to make each dish according to their own tastes. For a brochure with current menu and registration information, call 274-4516.

The couple opened the Avenue Grill in May, 2001 in Auburn, Nebraska. They have a daughter, Piper, 4 1/2, and a son Xander, born on May 21, 2005.

For more information, contact Cindy Monson at 402-242-2781 or 402-274-2541

Editor's note: The Avenue Grill has long been a supporter of Your Country Neighbor and was one of Leo's favorite places to eat. Cindy and BJ provide copies of this publication for their customers each month.



Window on Fifth Street

I've seen many beautiful days through my window on Fifth Street. Today I had a thought; what would it be like if I could look back through the window and watch a perfect day? What would I want it to be like?

My perfect day would begin with me making coffee (Darla doesn't drink the stuff), and sitting on the front porch enjoying the early morning air. The morning is cool and quiet. The birds sneak-attack the feeder for a sunflower seed breakfast and the sun sparkles through the branches, green with foliage.

After breakfast Darla and I each go to our computers, I, to check my e-mail, and Darla to work on her website. I'll read some internet news reporting and maybe a story from Joe or Frieda. Friday mornings I usually have something from Karen Ott.

Then either I do some serious work on my publication files or visit some businesses in nearby communities. A special day would include a photo shoot at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge during migration time. When I get home I load my photos into my computer and look for the best shots. At 5:30 Darla and I watch the news and then I prepare dinner.

In the evening Darla and I sit out on the porch watching the fireflies. After a movie or a favorite TV show we go to bed late, welcoming the cool sheets, soft pillow, breezes through the open window, and soft light from a summer moon.

And tomorrow will be another beautiful day.

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Do you recognize
these locations from Your
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I didn't have time for this game for August...stay 'tuned'.

Last month's 'Answers'

Top: Pelican Crossing? In reference to the residence of Mr. & Mrs. Pelican, owners of *Pelican Meats* in Johnson, Nebraska.

Middle, Road to Cooper Plant from Brownville, Nebraska.

Bottom, Water tower and grain elevators, Talmage, Nebraska.

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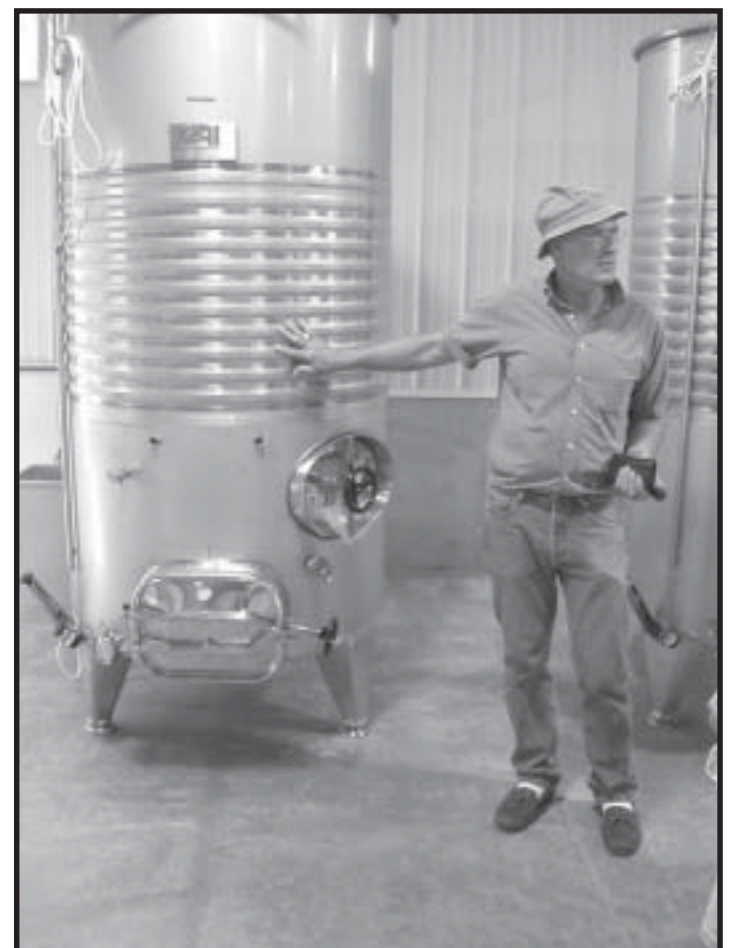
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Country Scenes



Fishing. I hope he catches one.



Just Friends.



More than just friends.



The song of the Western Meadowlark;
one of my favorite sounds.



The Village Bookstore in Brownville, where some
'Country Neighbor' photos are for sale.



Still sturdy, I imagine this barn has a noble story.

More pictures of country scenes are in color at: www.yourcountryneighbor.com

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BIRD SONG

by Lila Meyerkorth

I'm sitting on the patio as I really like to do
Listening to and drinking in the cheerful bird song
Excitedly awaiting the different songs I will hear
As their music floats out like a heavenly throng!

I know already that in just getting started
It's going to be mighty hard to stop
Even the sparrow flitting here and there
Is fun to watch at the birdbath taking a big gulp!

The Dickcissel is easy to identify
For he's ever calling his own name with glee
I keep sitting here simply entranced
With nature's bird song jubilee!

The noisy little Wren chooses the patriotic wren house
They come early to claim their home
The houses were made ready before they arrived
Each pair have one of their own!

I was told to prepare for the Bluebird
They'd be early this year—I obeyed
You have guessed it all right
In two days they arrived—good I never delayed!

The Brown Thrasher, I like him too
They've been here 29 years since the landscape
Chip the cat doesn't even bother them
He's busy catching moles and mice, so they escape!

The sparkling Goldfinch loves the thistle feeder
Maybe a dozen at a time
Have to work an extra hour a week
To pay for feed costing more than a dime!

I just heard a Woodpecker on top of the roof
So climbed up to see what he had done
Well, that pretty scoundrel had indeed made a hole
I guess, he at least, had some fun!

Oh! here comes the brilliant Cardinal
To eat sunflower seed off the ground
The Mama's not so showy
Her devoted family duties abound!

The Mockingbird sits on the clothesline
Flips around hanging on upside-down
Then flies a few feet away to say "watch me"
As he performs his antics like a clown!

Come and join me at 6 in the morning
We'll have coffee on the patio
You won't need to talk—nor I entertain
Hummingbirds will—we'll just exclaim, Oh! Oh! Oh!

The Baltimore Oriole beguiles me
I'm falling for him more and more
Melodious whistle, brilliant plumage, and gourd-shaped nest
Makes him one of my favorite four!

I saw a Redwinged Blackbird
And heard his amusing oka-l-e-e-e
And in my yard with a flock of Redwings
I saw a Yellowheaded one, my, that fascinated me!

One time I saw a Warbler, surprised he stayed so close
Rather sneaky I pretended to walk away
This little wild canary flitted to a bush nearby
But that Cowbird wouldn't let him stay!

It's with the Starling just like with people
Have their bad habits we all know
Yet he destroys so many unwanted insects
We keep his cranny and hole in tow!

As I drive to work in fall season
I especially watch the roads carefully
Nebraska's state bird, the Meadowlark, snatches falling grain
From the harvest truck, acting a bit like a big bully!

We could never forgive ourself
If we left out the Robin, an early spring delight
They are fun to watch as they run, stop, look, and listen
What a gift of song from morning till night!

The common Crow is unduly blamed
For those grasshoppers and evasive crickets I fight
Would be even worse, and those pesky moths too
So admire their system for they are doing all right!

And I like winter birds, all seasons have charm
I hear the Chickadees four note call "fe-be-fe-bay"
I gladly put out peanut butter and suet
To keep them around in the snowstorm all day!

What a welcome guest is the Junco
Looking out to the white blowing snow
This pleasant snowbird thanks me over and over
As he cleans up the feed I tossed on the patio!

The Dove makes me think of family gone on
That taught love through heartbreak, sorrow, and pain
I listen to the lonesome call over and over
And remember forgiveness and forgiving again and again.

I must wind up this untrammled bird song
As I listen right now to Bobwhite
Though it's hard to do, I must not bore you
Understanding, I'll be polite!

Oh! please, just one more—please?
The Catbird! that mysterious cat
I went looking for him in the shrub nearby
Thinking I should give him a neighborly pat
But instead he flew away—that subtle crafty bird
Frustrated I dropped to the ground and outwitted there I sat!

Postscript
As I walked out the door to do chores
Our national bird, the graceful Bald Eagle flew
Straight to the top of our old walnut tree
Mesmerized, I drank in that commanding view
For all creatures like you and like me
Can learn from this emblematic source how to use
Sharp vision and lofty heights, and how to be conscionably
free!

Color Photos

at

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Whisler's Hunting & Fishing Report



by Josh Whisler
Photos Provided by Author

Fishing:

Hello from Peru! I'm here to report that The Missouri River flow has fluctuated quite a bit in the last month and seems to be dropping steadily. "What's that mean to me," you ask? That means usually the fish aren't biting on the fall of the river. But since the spawn is just completing due to the warmer water temperatures, the fish are hungry and they don't care what level or stage the river is in, they want something to eat. I fished most every day the week following the 4th of July, and I'm here to tell you two things; the river is low and the fish are biting. I limited out on Channel Cats three times that week and never went home empty handed. Mostly because the Flatheads are hitting pretty steady also. Neither kind of fish were very big (2-1/2 to 4 pounders) but these are the eaters. You can do most anything with a fish this size. You can fillet them and prepare them on the grill with a little lemon pepper. Or leave them whole and panfry them. Either way keeps you going back for more. Again the fishing has been pretty good for the most part except in the heat of the day. When they go for cover you should too. Best times I have found are in the morning from 6:00 AM to around 11:00 AM and again from 6:00 PM to around 9:00 PM (dark). Something that hasn't been real bad this year are the bugs, or should I say the lack of them on the river. I don't know what's up but I'm going to enjoy it while it lasts. Mostly because that means there is just that much less DEET that I have to put on myself to stay out in them. Well, the baits of choice this last month for the Channels have been crawdads with fair action with night crawlers. The Flatheads have been hitting on chubs and goldfish.

This month's fishing pictures are of the lady fishermen out there.



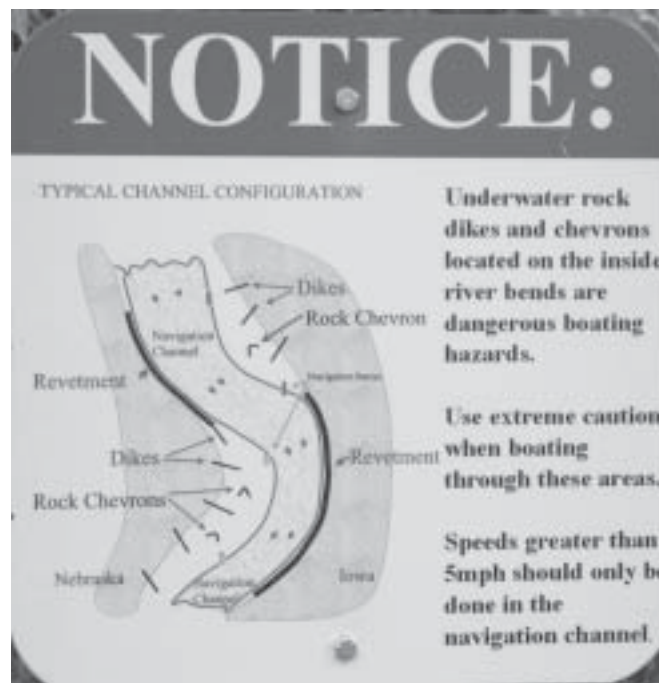
Katie Whisler from Peru shows a couple of Flathead keepers.



Cindy Moran from Peru has the fever showing her 5-pound Flathead Cat.

Warning to boaters:

When boating on the river be aware – the Corp of Engineers have made modifications to the river to aid in the preservation of several endangered species. These modifications can be dangerous to boaters who are unaware of these changes. I know about them because I have witnessed the construction of these structures. And now there are warning signs posted at local boat ramps. Here is a picture of the warning sign at the Peru Ramp.



Hunting:

I don't have a lot to report on for hunting this month. But keep in mind the hunting seasons are coming. Starting with Squirrel Season August 1st. Yes I said August 1st! That's what I'm talking about! The seasons are coming and time to check you rifle and shotgun out so you're prepared to dig right in when your favorite season comes along. I am here to report there was a fair hatch of turkeys in our area. With most hens I've seen nurturing 12 or more chicks. They don't stay exposed long with their chicks so I don't have a picture but I plan on working on that. I've also seen Whitetail doe fawns and bucks in velvet this last month. The fall harvest looks to be a good one.

As far as Deer permits that can still be obtained, nonresidents and residents who do not yet have their permit, can purchase their permit in any unit subject to availability, including statewide archery and muzzleloader. Purchase online or by mail through the Lincoln office. Or contact the Nebraska Game & Parks web page today at <http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/hunting/guide/hguide.html>.

The river has pretty much settled out providing some good fishing. And they are biting. If there is one thing for sure, It's always cooler at the river. So beat the heat, get out there, and give it a try. You won't be sorry. 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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Recipe of the Month

Fruit Pizza Party

Let the Good Times Roll

by Ann Yates

I'm sure most of you have heard of (and maybe made or tasted) fruit pizza by now. Here is a healthier than most, crust recipe, and a method that makes it a party.

Crust

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup whole wheat flour (1/2 cup of this may be replaced by oat flour)

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup soy flour

2 Tablespoon sugar

3 teaspoon baking powder

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter

1 beaten egg

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup light cream (or your choice of substitute, even skim or soy milk will work)

Mix dry ingredients together; cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Combine egg and cream; add all at once, stirring just enough to moisten. Do not over-stir or it will get rubbery. Now for the party preparation.

You will spread this into a crust similar to a pizza crust, about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick, and bake at 450 degrees for about 15 minutes. Instead of one large crust, make small individual ones. Use greased ovenproof saucers (most stoneware is ovenproof), or bake into saucer-size rounds on a greased cookie sheet and transfer to sturdy disposable plates when cool.

Spread each crust with softened cream cheese.

Set the table with pretty bowls containing the toppings, which may include:

Chopped assorted fruits (Strawberries, bananas, peaches, apricots, raspberries, I like to slightly cook the apple slices in the microwave with a little sugar and cinnamon first).

Chopped nuts (try separate bowls of peanuts, cashews, pecans or walnuts).

Toasted flake or shredded coconut (toast by placing on cookie sheet and bake at 400 degrees until lightly browned; watch carefully as it burns readily).

Sunflower seeds

Shaved chocolate

Cake decorating sprinkles

Anything your imagination can think of.

Have a big bowl of whipped cream ready at serving time. As you pass out the crusts to your guests you may want to spread the whipped cream yourself (children might get carried away). So now you have a thin layer of cream cheese, then a layer of whipped cream. Now each person arranges their toppings to their own specific taste. You need a fork since this is not really pizza crust but shortbread. Now relax and chow down.

As always, have fun and enjoy with loved ones.

Editor's note: *Honey Creek Vineyards Bakery* is open for call-in orders only, until August 22, when Ann hopes to have a **grand opening for the coffee shop.**

Call 872-4865 for favorites or specialty orders. Decorated cakes are now available upon request. Plus, Ann is at the Nemaha County Farmers Market Saturdays 8 am to noon, and Tuesdays 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

Diary of an Unemployed Housewife

By Merri Johnson

If you read my column about clotheslines last month, you know I'm a little old-fashioned about drying laundry. My *washing* preferences are thoroughly modern, however. Memories of my mom spending entire days in the basement feeding laundry through the wringer washer with its dual galvanized rinse tubs has cured me of any nostalgia in that department. I'm the unapologetic owner of a front-loading GE Profile energy star machine with 14 cycles and five wash and spin combinations.

But this column isn't about laundry. It's about that most revered summertime luxury: air conditioning.

Incredible as it seems, there are still people who don't have even a bedroom window air conditioner. Typically, they're older and live in a two-story house on a shady lot, but more significantly, they have the good sense to just take it easy and embrace a philosophy that doesn't expect this life to be continuously free of discomfort.

I try to emulate that outlook. Tough. Sensible. Patient in affliction. We don't have central A.C. My husband and I both prefer open windows and fresh air. Closing the house up for weeks, or even days, on end makes me feel deaf. I watch the finches at the bird bath and crave the sound of their song, so I head for the patio or front porch swing. But in two minutes, my clothes are sticking to me and I escape back to the cool, dark interior of rooms with blinds and shades closed against the sun.

I must confess I'm patient in affliction only to a point, and our lack of central A.C. is not entirely by choice. Our 89 year-old house still has the original hot water radiators, which means there is no duct work to pump cool air through the house. We looked into installing one of those attic A.C. systems where the cool air drops down through ducts and vents installed in the ceilings. But we calculated we'd have to live in this house until we're a hundred to get \$10,000 worth of comfort out of it. And I don't think the good Lord plans for us to be here that long.

Instead, we have a finely tuned 13-piece system consisting of a whole-house attic fan, three window air conditioners, five ceiling fans and four strategically placed oscillating floor fans. Our house was fortuitously designed with both a back stairwell and a semi-open front stairwell that join on a landing with a window. A 28,000 BTU Hampton Bay unit occupies that window. *Hampton Bay*...the name alone conjures cool breezes coming off the ocean, doesn't it? Maybe not quite. But from its elevated position, the air conditioner drops cool air down the stairwell into the living room, from whence we push it around with our system of fans. Imagine a relay race, with each fan handing off the air waves to the next one, continually lapping the first floor rooms. A lot of women would object to the floor fans on "décor grounds." But my dollar sense is more developed than my decorating sense, so I don't have too much trouble with it.

Upstairs, our bedroom benefits from being at the top of the stairs and stays comfortable as long as the door is left open. Since we're empty-nesters, that's not an issue. Last year we put room-size window units in the guest rooms, a luxury our kids remind us they never had when they occupied those rooms. But we decided guests probably would not appreciate the open-door policy our kids had to endure.

Growing up and living the first ten years of my adult life pretty much without air conditioning, I learned the discipline of opening the house at night and closing it up tight by mid-morning. That works fairly well if you have big shade trees, or until the nights forget to cool off.

I recall childhood summer nights on the farm. My two older sisters slept in the south upstairs bedroom that had a screen door opening onto a porch, so they got the southerly breezes. Lucky ducks. My two younger sisters and I got the north room. Our only relief from the heat was to push our pillows up against the window screens to cool down, relatively speaking. Then we'd lay our faces on the "fresh" side until it was hot and soggy again in about 30 seconds.

So, even though our A.C. system isn't as convenient or aesthetically pleasing as it might be, compared to pillows in the window sill, it's pretty cool.

Poetry, etc.

CLEAN CLOTHES

by Devon Adams

The line of clothes was sagging
from the weight of water that they wore
until a wild blue wind arrived.

Old worn jeans and cotton shirts
and socks and ragged overalls
kicked their legs and waved their arms
in jubilation for salvation from the sins
of dirt and sweat and grime.

In the white heat of the sun
these phantom human forms
were born again.

Life is easy when you're made of cloth
that comes out clean from soap and water.

Not so simple for the stain of images
that wouldn't wash away from human memories.

The River

by Devon Adams

The river runs hard against its banks, tearing at tree roots and stealing chunks of grass with clods of dirt attached. Dead branches ride high on the current as raging water churns through the night. In the wet dark the only sounds are wind lashing at the trees and the ominous gurgle of rising water. Explosions of electric blue accompany the sky trees made of lightning bolts as mighty thunder trains rumble through the rain and shake the ground. Now and then there is a deafening boom that sounds like a train wreck in hell.

Fear has no place here and the only urge is for survival as deer and fox and small things that live in the ground look for refuge. The cries of those who can't get out of the way are lost in the chaos. Floating trees with roots intact spin like jagged daggers and the muddy swirl wraps its hungry arms around bodies and buildings and carries them away. Debris rides the middle of the channel as water rises. Later, as water levels drop, the flotsam drifts to the edges of the river and lodges along the banks in random tangled heaps.

Then the tree bones, stripped of bark by the roiling flood, bleach in the sun and wind and weather. These careless skeletons are smooth and polished and their patina deepens with time. They are the ribs of fallen forests, casualties of the war of storms, remnants of a family whose roots were torn apart. Like ancient mammoth bones washed free from their past, these new bones will lie awhile on dry sand before the river rises once again to carry them to different resting places. In the counting of the hours and years, the wood will give up strength and dissolve to dust and lose itself. The bones will be forgotten memories.



A.D.D. and Me Attention Deficit Disorder from a Child's Viewpoint

by Debra L. Hall

ISBN 1-4208-4721-x
22 page 8x11 at 12.25
AuthorHouse
1663 Liberty Drive
Bloomington, IN 47403

This beautiful book is a must have for school counselors, psychologists, parents, or anyone who needs to understand Attention Deficit Disorder. Full of bright colors and positive messages, A.D.D. and Me is appropriate for all ages, including small children. This book is more than simply helpful and informative. It's a success story blueprint for anyone who reads it. A portion of the proceeds will go to C.H.A.D.D.

In 1976, Travis Hall was born into a loving, nurturing family. As Travis grew, he had difficulty concentrating, completing tasks, and interacting effectively with others. Concerned teachers wondered why he couldn't remember instructions or "settle down" and pay attention. Travis struggled due to his confusion and anger at needing constant reminders to complete simple, everyday tasks.

His parents soon learned to accentuate the positive accomplishments instead of dwelling on the negative behaviors. Travis is wonderfully gifted in many ways. His colorful drawings recreated in this book are proof of that. He is a handsome, physically healthy, and intelligent boy. Over time, Ms. Hall built on Travis' strong points with positive messages. The Halls also learned that hereditary traits often are a cause of A.D.D. With patience, understanding, and encouragement the adults in his life eased Travis towards adulthood.

Any parent, relative, teacher, counselor, psychologist, or child dealing with A.D.D. will benefit from this book. I will repeat that this book is beautiful, helpful, and wise, written from Travis Hall's point of view. When I called A.D.D. and Me a blueprint for success, I was not exaggerating. Travis Hall is a winner in every way. Highly recommended for all age groups.

Laurel Johnson
Midwest Book Review

Thank you for taking the time to read my books and poetry. You're kind support is very much appreciated.
Debra L. Hall—2005

DAY MOON

by Devon Adams

Day moon floating
in a pool of blue
waits for dark
to dry her body
in black velvet
towels of night.

More Winners of Southeast Consolidated Schools' Sixth Annual Literary Contest

Sixth Grade

Poetry

KITTEN/CAT

By Steven Hickey (1st Place)

Kitten
Small, playful
Running, playing, falling
Ball, mice, bell, bird
Learning, growing, hunting
Careful, alert
Cat

FORD/CHEVY

By Dylan Watkins (2nd Place)

Ford
Fast, dangerous
Whipping, sliding, speeding
Duals, interior, pedals
Wrecking, ramming, stalling
Slow, undependable
Chevy

CHILD/ADULT

By Jasmyne Aray Strauss (3rd Place)

Child
Playful, small
Growing, sleeping, dancing
Games, fun, family, job
Driving, watching, babysitting
Busy, responsible
Adult

Short Story

JOURNEY OF PARAKEETS

By Jonathan Sailors (1st)

One Sunday afternoon my mother, father, my brother Ben, and I had to clean Daisy and Diego's cage. So we took the cage into the exercise room, and we clothes-pinned the doors on the cage open, but Daisy and Diego would not come out.

So Dad came in and you won't believe what he did to their cage! He yanked the top of the cage off and turned it upside down! And boy did Daisy and Diego make a fly for it. They headed towards the window. Trying to get away they started eating the paint off the curtains in hopes of getting out. Ben tried to grab them but, being smarter, they flew away from the window. Diego had many wall accidents, playing "chase me" around the room with Ben. He did dive bombs right into the door and window. Daisy only had two or three dive bombs. So Daisy thought it would be funny to perch on one of the arm handles of the treadmill. Then Daisy went back into the black cage which is the taming cage. She was trying to get away from my mother's flashing camera. All of a sudden I felt something on my shoulder. It was Diego! Ben had put Diego on my shoulder. Diego started to scrape at my shirt but it tickled more than it hurt. The sight of Diego on my shoulder made Ben want to take a picture. The picture looked kind of spooky because Diego was not looking at the camera. So while Diego was playing I got him to perch on my finger. Do you know how I got Diego to perch on my finger? I will tell you. I put my finger up to Diego's breast and told him to "step up, step up." And he obeyed.

Then Daisy, hiding in the black cage, poked her head out but she quickly went back in and Ben grabbed her and let her fly in the room. Boy did she have a good time flying! Ben had to play "chase me" around the room with Daisy this time instead of Diego. Ben thought it was going to be easy to catch her, but she was a quick little parakeet. Finally Ben caught her and put her back in the cage and she waited awhile and came back out. And boy did she cause a stir again. It was as if she said "Watch out before I whack you!" Because all of sudden I was standing on the weight bench and I heard a loud SMACK! I looked back and Daisy was sitting on the ground. She was lucky she didn't break a single bone in her body. Then my mom came in with the squeaky clean blue cage. Finally we got them put away, but not before Daisy had nibbled at my finger and had given Ben a bloody finger. And the birds lived happily ever after. The End

FOR MY BIRTHDAY WHEN I TURNED NINE

By Libbey Anderson (2nd)

When I turned nine, for my birthday I went to Kearney to see my sister. I wanted to go to the Embassy Suites in Lincoln but we had to go to Linsey's because we had to help her move in with her dad for the summer. We went to Linsey's to help her move and we stayed at her apartment for the night. The next day we checked into Holiday Inn. After we unpacked, Devin and I went swimming with Dad. Mom was still unpacking but when she was done she came to the pool to watch us. When we got back to our room we watched TV. Mom and Dad were looking for a place to eat

Later that evening we went to Whisky Creek where my sister works. While we were eating my sister came to our table to visit with us and sat by me. She ate one of my French fries and this turned out to be a problem. Do you know what the problem was? We didn't! She got a stomach ache and she didn't look good. She had to keep working because they were really busy that night. She still didn't look good when she came home but by the next day she was all better.

The next morning we all got ready to leave, to start for home. But before we went home, we did go shopping to pick up a few things. Finally we started our three and a half hour drive home to Nemaha. I had so much fun on my ninth birthday with my family. Did you have a good time on this trip?

THE DOG THAT PULLED MY TOOTH

By Paige Shiley (3rd)

One day I was going to play with my dog, Jake. I went outside to him and he got excited and jumped up on me. I had a loose tooth and when he jumped up his paw went in my mouth and got caught on my loose tooth and out came my tooth. I ran and told my mom and dad that Jake pulled out my tooth. So we all walked back over to where the dog was and tried to look for my tooth... We all looked and looked and we could not find my tooth. I was upset because I didn't know how the Tooth Fairy would know that I had lost my tooth. So Mom and I wrote the Tooth Fairy a letter that night. We told the Tooth Fairy what the dog had done and that we couldn't find the tooth, so please be kind and leave me some money. The next morning when I woke up, the Tooth Fairy had been very kind because she left me some money... This is how the dog pulled my tooth.



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JESSE JAMES' HOUSE

by Frieda Burston

It was no place and no time for me to tell the truth about the Jesse James House, so I lied. I always feel sorry about lying like that, but when the truth is long and involved and a lie is fast and simple, and it's not something that matters a whole lot, why not?

I felt bad about it on the day of the Apple Blossom Parade in St. Joe, but not bad enough to stop lying to save time. Thirty years later I was still doing it, in a classroom in San Diego.

I had spent days making a visual presentation of the coming of the Spanish ships to the Americas, and I expected to bring it home to every little second grade heart there that if they had looked out from where we all now sat, we could have seen those ships coming up like big white birds out of the water, and that's what we would have thought they were.

"How do you know that?" asked Tommy.

I was prepared. "I read it at the Museum in a notebook that a soldier wrote, a soldier who was on one of those ships."

"How do you know the soldier wrote it?" Tommy persisted.

"Because he married an Indian girl, and their grandchildren saved all his things and gave them to the Museum."

"But who says he was telling the truth?"

The attention of my little audience was slipping away. I said desperately, "Because I was there, and I saw it, and that's exactly how it was!"

Tommy sat back and said, "Well, why didn't you say so in the first place?"

Now, you see why I was still lying, thirty years after the Apple Blossom Parade?

I was standing in Smith Park downtown in St. Joe, and the crowd was three deep there to watch the parade at close up. When the Jesse James House came by, I said out loud without thinking, "Oh, THAT isn't the Jesse James house!"

Unfortunately, I was standing near a lady who turned out to have been on the Parade Committee, and she heard me. She was a very gracious lady, and a very condescending one to explain their errors to the young. "Of course it's not the real Jesse James House," she said, "It's called a fac-SIM-ileee, sort of like making a carbon copy exactly like something but you can move it around. We couldn't move the house around, you know."

I felt that I had to explain. "The Jesse James House has a window ACROSS from the door but UP from that corner, not DOWN from it like this."

"Really!" The lady became frosty. "And how do you know that? Did you live near it?"

Right there I saw how long and involved it would be to tell the truth.

I lied. I said, "Yes, I lived near it."

The lady pushed out her jaw, pulled out a notebook, and made a note. I could see that someone was going to get into trouble, and I melted back before she could pin me down and the truth would matter. I could only lie comfortably if the truth didn't matter.

The reason I was so positive about where the windows were, was that I had tiny splinter scars on my belly where I had clambered through one of them to get into the house. But I wasn't going to pull up my dress in Smith Park to show her, and then maybe she'd want to know what I was doing there, etc., etc., etc., and the parade would be long over and I'd still be there explaining. So I lied, and lit out.

Just to show how complicated the truth is, I'll start at the beginning of how I knew about the windows in Jesse James' house.

Papa had lost the family shirt when he tried to open a produce store in Emporia, Kansas but didn't read the fine print on the real estate contract. It was Deep Depression time. We lived in the House By the Tracks, among other poor people. No electricity, just a kerosene lamp. A faucet in the house, but no drain. Spidery outhouse in back. Four chairs bought for 25 cents each at the second hand store, (five in the family, but not enough food for sit-down meals, so it didn't matter). Po' folks.

Po' folks, but not shif'less. Very shifty indeed. Mama ripped apart Brother #1's shirts and pants when he outgrew them, and reseeded them inside out for fresher color— by hand, mind you, there being no sewing machine— for Brother #2.

Normally, they would then have been ripped apart again and reseeded into dresses for me. But by the time Brother #2 had outgrown Brother #1's clothes, there was nothing but acres of mending and darning to hold the original threads together. So I wore party dresses all the time. Party dresses? Yes.

Mama's cousins back East used to send her a box of their old clothes to cut down for me, every year. Well, what kind of old clothes are always nice enough to give away to your cousins? Clothes you rarely wore, and took good care of, when you did. Party clothes.

So every year Mama unpacked a box of gorgeous bead-encrusted glamor-fabric dresses, and every year I helped her turn them into my school dresses. Mama would sit by the

kerosene lamp at night, and snip the threads holding on one bead at a time. I'd catch them and corral them in paper twists to save for stringing fun.

Then Mama would take the dresses apart, wash them to remove the thread holes, and turn them into my school dresses.

So while other girls wore cotton dresses their moms had put together from sugar bags or flour bags, I went around NOT playing games because my party dress fabrics would come apart with any strain. I had to be on my best behavior all the time.

Now Mama had left behind some friends in the old neighborhood, when we went to Kansas and lost everything. She hadn't lost the friends, and when the holiday season rolled around at the end of summer, Mama used to take us kids, load us with garden goodies, and walk back to visit the old friends. Then others would gather, and the ladies would shoo all us kids out to go play and let them saucer their tea in peace and quiet.

This year the older boys tore off up the hill behind the houses and into a neglected dirty little woods. The older girls followed. I was trailing everyone because I had to be careful of my dress—a pale green little cloud of ruffles blowing around me. By the time I got into the woods, I saw them headed for an old shack. The boys ran in through the door and were frolicking around on the warped pine floor. The girls couldn't jump from the ground to the front stoop, so the girls ran around to the window at the back.

The other girls climbed in through that window, but it was too high off the ground for me. The land sloped up at the side, so I went that way. There was a splintery window frame there that I could climb through, but it would ruin my dress. What to do?

I looked around to see who was watching. The boys had jumped out of the shack and were running uphill again. The girls followed. If I didn't hurry, I'd be alone, lost in the woods. There was no path around the house. I had to go through.

I reached under my dress to my cotton petticoat, and rolled it up around my chest with my dress inside. Then I scrambled over the window frame. Splinters tore into my belly button, but I couldn't stop to cry. My dress was safe. I ran through the house, jumped out of the door, scrambled up out of the pit, and ran after the vanishing crowd.

That night when Mama helped me take off the fragile green dress, she saw blood on my petticoat, and found the splinters embedded in me. She went for the splinter-needle and burned it to sterilize it. Then she operated, while I cried buckets. Creolin was more merciful than iodine, but it burned too. She burned the needle again and stuck it into an old candle to keep it sterile. Po' folks Emergency Medicine. I went to sleep in an old outworn, outgrown shirt of my brothers', but I spent most of the night running after the crowd in my sleep. I still spend some sleep time chasing through woods after glimpses of disappearing feet—

I don't know what Mama asked the boys next morning, but they told her they had danced on the grave of a bad robber.. Mama said that Jesse James wasn't buried there, and it was very disrespectful to dance where people had died. When we went visiting the next year, the Jesse James shack was off-limits to all the kids in the crowd.. Instead, we all got pennies to go down a few blocks to a corner grocery and choose candy. Trading bites after that took up most of the afternoon, and left no scars like the windows of Jesse James' House. I was happy, especially since I was wearing a neat and practical cotton dress made from old dish towels and dyed with yellow onion skins.

But you see now why the truth is so involved. Every bit of this story is necessary to prove that I did indeed know where the windows were on Jesse James house. But you can see why I didn't try telling that Committee woman this story, back where it started with the beaded green dress.

I never argued about Jesse James' House again. When I went down to Columbia to study at MU, I found that all the girls in my co-op sang "But the dirty little coward who shot Mr. Howard, he has laid pore Jesse in his grave"— I had no idea that anybody in Missouri idolized that vicious raider and robber. Now that I know more Civil War history, I know that since the girls came from Swamp-East Missouri bordering Tennessee and Kentucky), they naturally had the Southern view that Jesse was a hero. That view went with the territory.

But that wasn't the view in St. Joe. When it came to Jesse, St. Joe was Union and Jesse James was part of Quantrill's Raiders from over the Free-State-Kansas line. Most of St. Joe would have felt that dancing on the floor where Jesse had fallen, was quite proper, and completely respectful of law and order in Missouri.

The last time I saw Jesse James' house was in the 1970's or 80's. It had been dragged out to the freeway and was the tourist attraction for a motel. It was all gussied up, painted and prettied to look like a house, not like the dried and crumbling shack that we children had played in. We stayed all night in a motel room there, just for the fun of saying so. I put a quarter in the slot on the bedpost, and the water bed went into deep waves. It shook until I got seasick and had to sleep sitting up in a chair.

I don't know about that house on the freeway. Seems to me it was another fac-SIM-ileee like the one in the Apple Blossom Parade. Or maybe my head was too muddled after a night of waving water, for me to check the windows with my scars..

Anyway, I saw that I was right in lying about it so many years ago. People were going to believe what they wanted to believe about the Jesse James House, and the truth didn't matter one way or the other.

Seems to me that a fac-SIM-ileee can also be a lie, so if it doesn't matter, go ahead and fac-SIM-ileee all you want to— as long as it doesn't matter, it's all right.

A Farm Report from the Western Plains

The Face of Drought

by Karen Ott
July, 2005

Hot and dry.

We harvested winter wheat this week, the red/gold kernels spilling from the combine into the truck and from the truck into the wheat pit at the local elevator. Except for some minor glitches combining went well, unloading was a different matter. Long waits at the elevator (sometimes as long as 2 ½ hours) in 108 degree temps was excruciatingly uncomfortable to say the least; no air conditioners in our trucks...just wheat chaff, biting flies and sweat.....and one cranky woman.

Dale and I worked several nights until almost midnight, laboring to bring the crop in at its peak; although, like most farmers, we questioned the wisdom of chasing two dollar wheat with almost three dollar diesel.

The extreme temperatures have farmers, and everyone else who works in the out of doors, operating in survival mode. Even with plenty of cold water at the ready the threat of heat exhaustion or heat stroke is a real possibility. There's just no way to stay cool when it's 105 in the shade and 115 (or higher) in the sun. Just walking out the door of the house requires real fortitude.

While we suffer the heat the cattle on the home place have worked out a foolproof system for relief; when the pivot moves so do they. On its eastern arc the pivot's end gun shoots a cooling mist out over the pasture; it didn't take our gals long to figure out that a spritz on a hot day was just the ticket. Television's sleek and sassy 'Happy California Cows' have nothing over on our Mid-western beauties.

The news headlines have given me almost as many headaches as the hot weather: Court limits private property rights, Sugar on Table in Thai trade talks, Canadian border reopened to beef, Cargill to build bulk Panama port facility.

The Supreme Court's property rights ruling came out of left field; unneeded and uncalled for it places every farmer and rancher (and every other property owner) at risk of deep-pocket carpet-baggers who view the land as nothing more than a pawn in the high stakes game of wheeling and dealing. Shame, shame on them; whatever was the court thinking?

The fact that trade talks with Thailand includes the possibility of giving yet another country access to the U.S. sugar market wasn't a surprise; at least not to the sugar growers who have been saying all along that CAFTA would set a sugar precedent. Sugar representatives have urged the government to handle the sugar issue at the WTO negotiating table where trade distorting subsidies could be addressed, instead of in piecemeal trade agreements, but the request has, and continues to be disregarded.

The open access offer to the Thais beyond its current duty-free sugar quota is a killer. It's obvious the US sugar grower will never be able to compete; but then maybe that's what 'the powers that be' have had in mind all along.



Canadian Border: Score.....meat packers and processors...1, America's independent farmers and ranchers.....0.

And as for Cargill's new Panama port facility; I doubt it's being built to handle all that North American corn and beef heading south, after all, just how much beef could a \$2.00 dollar a day central American worker buy? Just call me cynical in the Midwest, but I'm betting it won't be too long before South American ethanol is fueling North American vehicles.

I know, I know, I sound like a turn of the century populistWell, maybe I am.....and who has more right to be one than me? My family is on the receiving end of the effort to dismantle traditional U.S. agriculture and replace it with a network of 'cat's cradle' trade agreements. Like the children's game, where a deft hand movement or two changes the initial arrangement of string into something entirely unsuspected, the agreements aren't always what they appear to be.

But enough of that; it's high summer here on the plains and life is good: the grandkids are growing like weeds, the beans are vining and the corn is tasseling. The Platte is shallow and running smooth as glass, each overhanging branch and high flying cloud reflected from its surface in breathtaking clarity. This year the cattails are blooming, and while that may not seem worth mentioning, for us it's a small sign the land is trying to heal. There's grass in the pastures, hay in the fields and daylilies blooming by my front door.

Yes, we are tired...bone tired from endless work, but Dale and I are thankful for what we have: our faith, our family, our farm and most of all, each other.

Together we can bear all things.

Karen

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Movies

by Joe Smith

"Pay It Forward" was a movie that came out five years ago. It was also a book that my wife read. The other night we had a coupon to rent two movies. We had to return them the next day. We should have rented one at a time. Hindsight is a damn sight better than foresight.

Anyway, we sat down to watch the first movie, "The Fockers", a comedy. Then we watched the other movie, "Pay It Forward". After watching this movie I couldn't even remember what the other movie was about.

It starts out with a news man being given a new car. The man that gave it to him just said "Pay It Forward". This intrigued the reporter to no end. He started a search to find out where it started. This doing something nice for someone and not wanting anything in return had him following it from one person to the next. From a man in prison to a bag lady and then to an eleven-year-old boy who actually started the trend of "Pay It Forward".

This boy had a new teacher in the seventh grade who gave the class an assignment to do something that would change the world for the better. The boy's mother was working at a Las Vegas place, and was also an alcoholic. His dad was nowhere around when the movie starts, but shows up later. To help the world be a better place, the boy brings home a druggie from the dumps, feeds him and lets him sleep in the old pickup in the garage. It didn't run anyway. That was the boy's idea, just to help three people and this fellow was the first. He had the idea that for every three people he helped they in turn would help three people each and soon it would be around the world. He later has to try to get his teacher and his mother together. The teacher has problems of his own and is very reluctant to go through with this deal, but finally does.

The whole show is a good lesson for our youth today. It teaches them to help other people that can't get help from other sources. It reminds me of our country right here in the Midwest. When a farmer gets hurt in the field, help is never far away. There will be several combines and trucks there the next day or two to finish his work. When a loved one is lost, the people all turn out to offer help or food, even money on occasions. We have had several things happen in our family and the turn-out of friends was amazing. Letters from people we didn't know with a check or just cash in it. Given the chance, most midwesterners will help at the drop of a hat. Mostly neighbors, but not always. Complete strangers stop along the road to offer assistance. Back east?? People are afraid to stop and help anyone. I'm sure the rural areas are similar to the Midwest. So if your kids or grandkids are giving you trouble, rent that movie and sit down and watch it with them. It will give them food for thought. It does have a sad ending. Joe



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