

Your

Country Neighbor

FREE!

August 2006

Your Nemaha Valley

Voice



August is “back to school” time, “beginning harvest” time, but still “summer time”. This cover photo is of an “old-fashioned” harvest of oats to be thrashed in September at the Indian Creek Museum west of Emerson and east of Malvern, Iowa. Below is a wheat harvest in early July south of Syracuse, and the first of many grape harvesting for Whiskey Run Creek Vineyard & Winery.

An old-fashioned harvest of oats at *Indian Creek Museum* near Malvern, Iowa.



Southeast Nebraska began harvesting grapes in late July.



Finishing the wheat harvest, early July, south of Syracuse, Nebraska.

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Emergency Volunteer Center Training

Those interested in becoming Disaster Responders are invited to come and learn how to run an Emergency Volunteer Center.

Contact: Theresa Gomez at Region V Systems, 402-441-4358, tgomez@region5systems.net

Imagine a devastating emergency in your community. A large number of volunteers from the outside would be required to help address the problems and needs. Who would be there to greet them? Who would provide the necessary identification and orientations for them? Who would determine where they could best be utilized and where the need was the greatest?

The quickest way to get volunteers to leave a disaster scene is to not be organized when they arrive to help.

Emergency Volunteer Centers are facilities that are activated during emergency or disaster situations to manage the influx of unaffiliated volunteers who arrive on-scene.

Region V Systems is partnering with the Five Rivers Resource, Conservation, & Development (RC&D) to conduct Emergency Volunteer Center (EVC) training sessions at two locations in southeast Nebraska. The training is free.

The location and time is:

Saturday, August 19, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Saline County Extension
306 West 3rd St.
Wilber, NE

Community members interested in becoming part of a database of emergency volunteers are encouraged to attend one of these sessions to learn more about an EVC, how one is operated, and why it's important to have community volunteers trained to manage one. You can provide an important and very necessary service to your community by attending one of these two-hour training sessions to learn how to staff an Emergency Volunteer Center (EVC).

To register to attend this event, or for more information, contact Theresa Gomez, Region V Systems, at 402-441-4358, or via e-mail at tgomez@region5systems.net. This event is being sponsored by Region V Systems, Five Rivers RC&D, Southeast District Health Department, and Public Health Solutions.

Your Country Neighbor

Delivered to Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska!

In Nebraska: Auburn, Avoca, Barada, Brownville, Cook, Dawson, Dubois, Elk Creek, Falls City, Humboldt, Johnson, Nebraska City, Nehawka, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee City, Peru, Shubert, Stella, Syracuse, Table Rock, Tecumseh, Union, Verdon, and Weeping Water.

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

In Iowa: Emerson, Essex, Hamburg, Malvern, Riverton, Shenandoah, Sidney, Tabor.

Country Scenes at

www.yourcountryneighbor.com

The archives include pictures taken from the early years of this publication, as well as pictures that show more recent seasonal changes. All pictures on the site are in color, except for the publication archives; sports pictures are free to download.

Some regional advertisers help support the web site.

Color Photos

at

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Your

COUNTRY NEIGHBOR

Your **Voice** of the Nemaha Valley

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Your Country Neighbor, LLC

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Peru, Nebraska 68421

countryneighbor@alltel.net

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Country

Scenes



North of Pawnee City, Nebraska



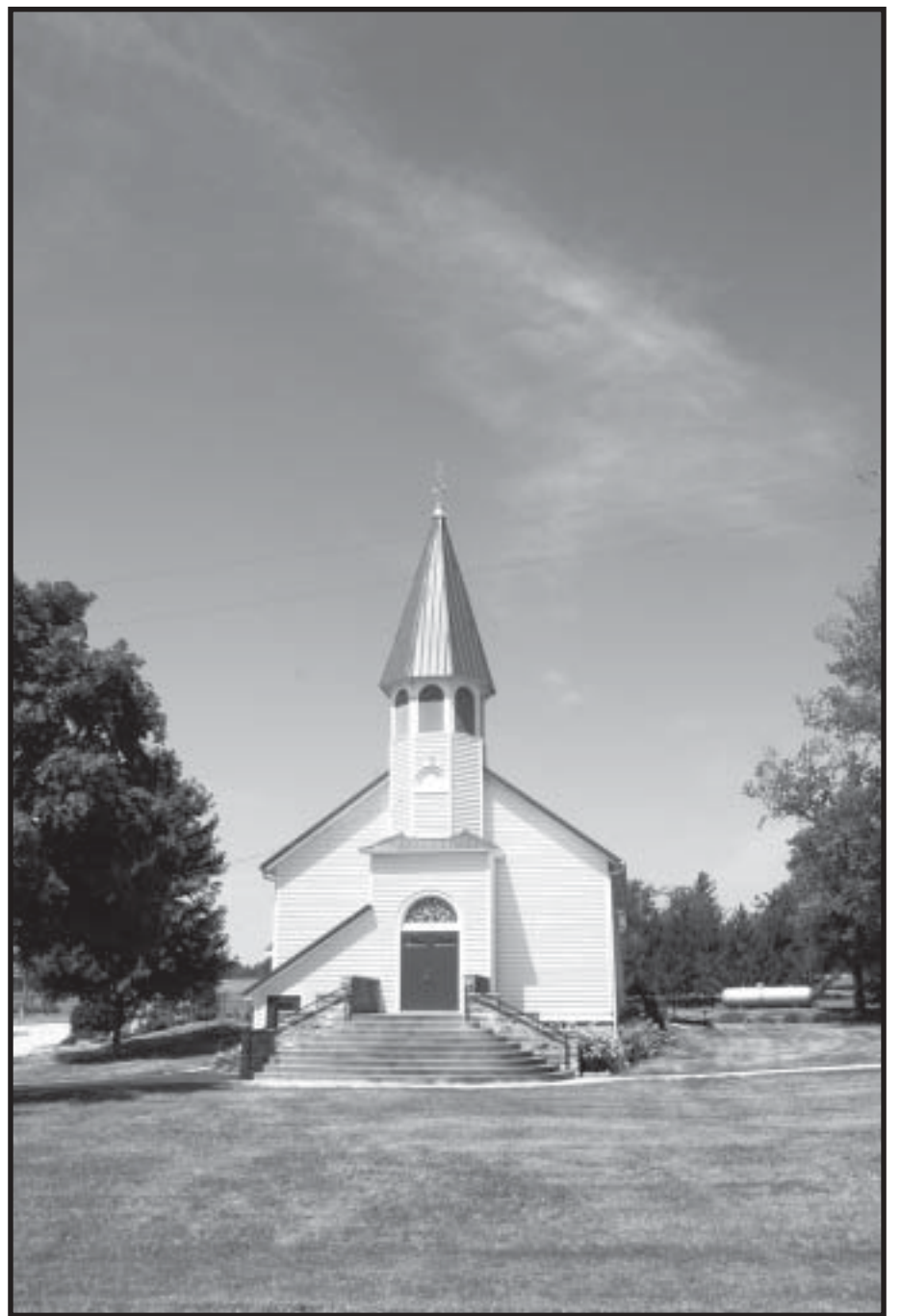
Red barn southwest of Brownville, Nebraska



Nice 'country' home west of Auburn, Nebraska on 136.



Vineyards are becoming more common in Southeast Nebraska.



Country Church north of Seneca, Kansas

Property Taxes and the Protest Process

by Joe Smith

My wife and I went to the courthouse and protested our property tax evaluation. We had facts and talked to the people listening to all the protests. They allowed only 10 minutes for us. We held our tempers and put a zipper on our mouths. They did agree to send a person out to check the place. The nice lady showed up and checked out the place and ended up dropping the valuation a lot, thanks to the way they handled the meeting. It was short but long enough if you had your information ready. Marta kept kicking me on the shins to keep it down. It must have worked.

The question is why the Assessors made so many mistakes all over the state. The whole tax system needs to be revamped. For one thing, if people pay a big price for a place, they should have to pay taxes on that amount, not shove it on the rest of us. "Farmers" come down with money they never got from Farming and pay twice what these farms are worth just because they need somewhere to go with their money. There are farms sold to Lawyers and Doctors who don't care if the farm makes money, they just need a write-off for their taxes. The law makers ought to wake up to this practice that goes on year after year. Our law makers just don't understand the difference between farmers who want to make a living out of farming and people that just want a write-off. I know we did elect them, but some times I wonder why. Our present tax problems are going to cause a mass exodus of people. It has already started. So where is the state going to get their money when half of the people leave the state. I'm still thinking about it along with a LOT of other people. This last round of tax hikes might just turn every one off. It is a wonder somebody didn't get strung up over this BS. I've heard several people saying they just would refuse to pay their taxes. If enough people would do that they would get the law makers attention real fast. I wonder how many people just didn't want to protest because thought it wouldn't do any good. This what the state wants you to do, just sit back and give up.

If they would drop the property taxes in half, the state would start growing instead of losing people. The tax situation here in this state is why people are moving out. There are a lot of us country folks that don't draw the money you big city boys

do and we just can't afford these taxes. My taxes before they adjusted them would have been near \$400 a month on my own place, only 120 acres. Not big enough to make a living on. Now if you don't have much income they will give you a homestead exemption, which a lot of our elderly have to have or they would be broke all the time. Social Security doesn't pay enough for people that farmed all their life to even bring in groceries, let alone pay for the high cost of medical expenses, and taxes. What would we do without Medicare? The cost of any testing is way out of line. I had a MRI a couple of weeks ago; the cost was over \$2000 plus the hospital and the doctor. Where, oh where, is it going to end? I filled up the van, \$50 bill. Corn still down in the low \$2.00 range, diesel is over \$3.00. I think I will turn to Politics. Maybe that would pay better, I doubt it though. I might get shot. We need help to turn this all around. How? I haven't the slightest idea, but I am waiting to hear from anybody with ideas.

The other day I had to go to the Beatrice Social Security Office and they had a guard in there sitting in the lobby. I wonder how much he is paid. I guess it is dangerous working with old folks, they might hit you with their cane. I guess there is a reason but I can't think of what it is. Folks if you don't stand up for yourself, don't cry about the taxes. Learn to root, hog, and growl. Joe

What is the Marriage Protection Act?

by Bernice Nordhus, Seneca, KS

Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this constitution or the constitution of any state, shall be construed to require marriage as the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon any union other than the union of a man and a woman.

1. The first sentence simply states that marriage in the United States consists of the union of one man and one woman.
2. The second sentence ensures that states can determine the allocation of the benefits to be associated with marriage.
3. AFM's Marriage amendment has no impact at all on benefits offered by private businesses and corporations.
4. People have a right to live as they choose but no one has the right to redefine marriage for our entire society.

Marriage is the basis of America's society. Please go online and cast your vote for the Marriage Amendment.

In the letter to Senator Nelson by David A. Wright, Ph.D., it seems to me that he puts the question in the minds of people, "am I male or am I female?" I don't doubt that in the very early stage of embryonic life, there is a potential to be either male or female.

My husband and I will be married 57 years this year and are the parents of 12 children, seven of whom are girls, and five boys. When they were born, we were told either "you have a girl" or "you have a boy." There were no maybe's.

Our culture has become so obsessed with sex today that it has totally denied the personhood of a male or female, such as "who am I as a man or as a woman?" Because our culture denies the existence of a God who made us, we have become lost in a sea of misunderstanding of who we are as a person.

If someone had told us when we were married that someday we would have to defend marriage, we would have thought them a bit unbalanced. (The same with abortion.)

Marriage is more than a choice of life-style! It is a gift from God for humankind. It provides a way to bring children into the world and care for them in a loving committed relationship. Because our culture has trained us to be selfish, loving committed relationships are suffering and the victims are our children. Marriage and family life have to be supported, even if it takes a constitutional amendment. If the family goes, so goes the nation. The signs of the times tell us we are on the downhill slope. WAKE UP AMERICA!

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WHAT IF...?

by Amber McConnaughey

What if everybody had his or her own way, every day until the end of time?
Would there ever be an end of time?

What if everybody had three wishes?
Would the world become its own paradise, or would it become a living hell?

What if everybody could go back and change one thing from the past?
Would history be changed for the good, or would it lead to something that could
end everything that we know today?

What if everybody had everything that they ever wanted?
Would there be a point to life?

What if everybody could punish one person who made his or her life a living hell?
Would there be anybody left?

If we didn't have any wants, truly we wouldn't have anything.

If we didn't have any needs, we wouldn't be here.

So why complain?
We already have everything that we want and need right here.

We all shed our share of tears.

We cry when we're sad and we cry when we're happy.

So don't cry that you're sad that your sister, daughter, mother, father,
husband, wife, son, or brother has just died.

Cry. Yes, cry! Let it all out! But do it because you're happy, not sad.

Be happy that the person you truly love has just made it through life,
experiencing problems, wants, and needs; and is now with the Lord.

Life is a thunderstorm, but after every thunderstorm there is a rainbow.

And I believe that at the end of every rainbow there is a pot of gold.

And there's plenty to go around!

Does your belief require cancelling the belief of another?

by Stephen Hassler, Publisher

The publisher of *Your Country Neighbor* does not believe in censorship. Opinions expressed herein will seldom be agreeable to everyone, and in a free society objections are expected and respected. But to label a writer because they have a different opinion is to oppose a freedom guaranteed by our constitution and defended by our soldiers ever since 1776.

You have a right to your opinion, but that does not make you right. Furthermore, you do not have the right to impose your opinion on anyone. Freedom of religion means you don't have to believe what others may believe, and that it's wrong for you to insist that others should believe the way you do. If everyone were required to agree with everyone else, our greatest American values would not exist. No free speech, no freedom of religion.

In more than one town in this area, population decline is related to some residents attempting to restrict the freedoms of others. Some residents don't just move to another neighborhood, they leave the community. What remains is a community with bias and bigotry, existing within a limited definition of freedom, and so, without real freedom.

The silent majority must speak up before November, or their choices at the polls will remain limited.



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Bea's Flower Buzz

"The Climbing Clematis"

by Bea Patterson

Dear Country Gardeners, are you noticing how our summer gardens have been moving along at too fast a pace? It seems the excitement of spring peonies and iris have long ago given way to the more sun-loving plants that thrive in drier conditions. Also the big plans we had for this summer's garden have gotten mostly completed ...or not.

At this point, many of us have slowed down to a *mostly-maintenance-mode*, enjoying the fruits of our labors, and looking forward to the late summer/early fall blooms yet to come, as well as looking ahead to next year with new ideas, new plant combinations, better locations for this or that, remedies...you gardeners know what I am talking about.

In that regards to *next year*, I want to address three of the most often asked questions I get in the *spring* at the Pick-Me-Up Greenhouse. "How can I get a **clematis** started?" "How do I care for a **clematis**?" "How is **clematis** pronounced?"

Starting a Clematis

I learned the hard way, so now my advice to you is this: Don't mess around with seeds or cheap plants at the local drugstore because roots are just too young to be hardy enough. Purchase the most mature vine you can afford at a reputable nursery. The more mature plant has a well established root system (which takes 2 or 3 years by itself), and it will be strong enough to tolerate transplanting, plus the vine will more quickly start work on producing blossoms.

However, *if you want to take forever*, one can harvest seedpods that have dried on the vine and plant them outdoors in the fall. My "Sweet Autumn" sends out little shoots from the roots, so I am trying that this summer.

Choose the Right Clematis for Your Needs

Purchase the variety that best meets your requirements of available light and desired blooming season.

Clematis are classified in three groups:

Group 1 (or A) = spring bloomers

Group 2 (or B) = summer bloomers

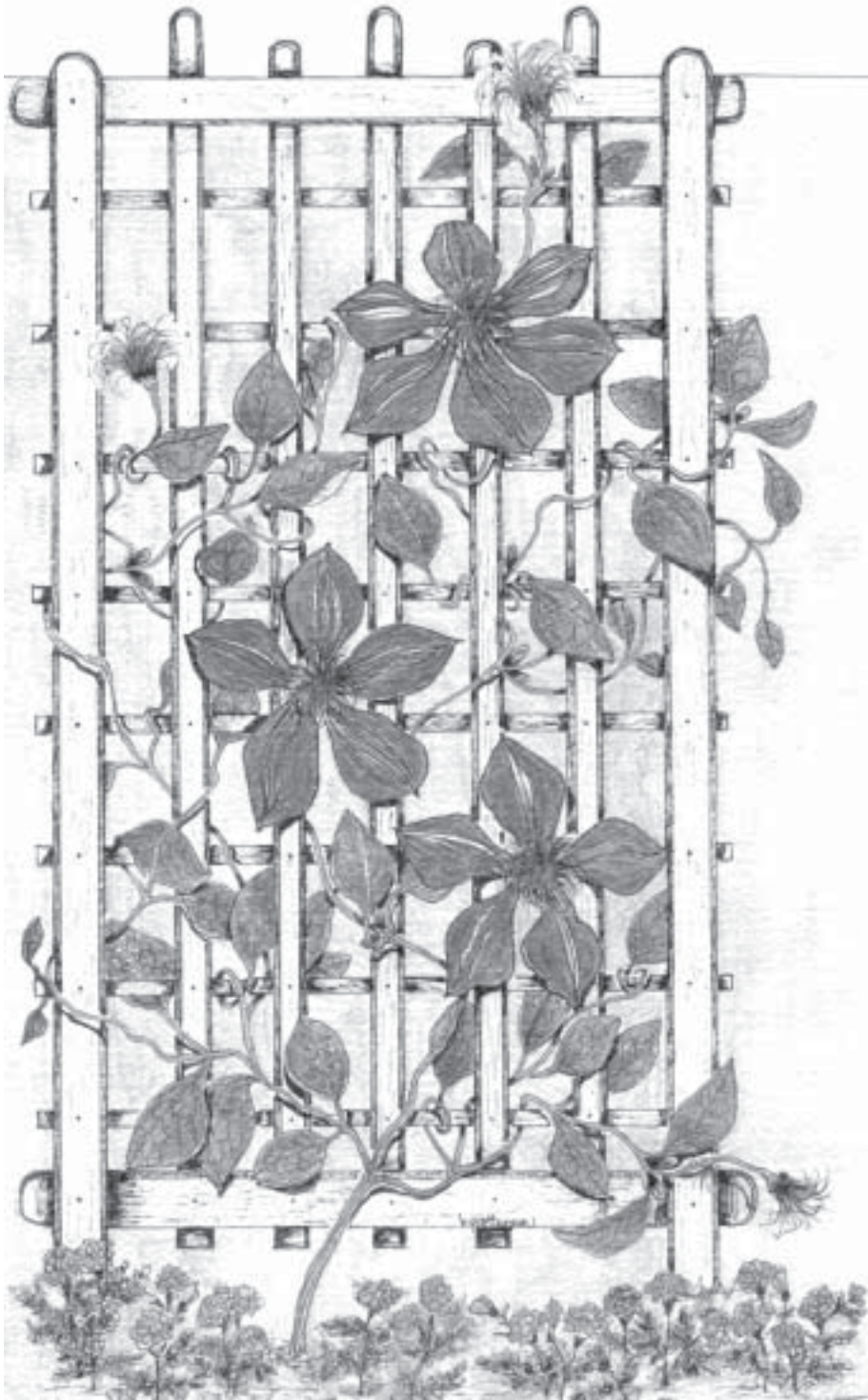
Group 3 (or C) = late summer/early autumn bloomers

Be sure you find the above information before you make a purchase.

Planting Tips

- Be sure the soil is rich and loose so the ground won't pack down hard and strangle the poor roots; they like to free range.
- Pick a location where the soil drains well. Clematis doesn't want to be standing in water because it is in a low spot.
- The vine needs to have its "feet protected," that is, plant other low growing flowers close to the base so roots are sheltered, still allowing tops to be in the sun. Or, mulch around the base to within 7"-8" of the crown.
- Clematis climbs by twining its leaf stems around the support. Therefore, the support needs to be intertwined (if using a standard board trellis, say) with thin, knotted twine, string, or nylon fishing line to allow the leaf stem to grab and twist around it.

Like most vines, clematis takes two, three, or more seasons to really produce a good flower display, so, please be patient – the wait will be well worth it!!



Growing Tips

Clematis benefits from pruning. Pruning should be done according to what group the clematis belongs, as mentioned above:

Group 1 } When needed, should be pruned after blooming. Re-growth can then occur over the summer and again be well established before cold weather.

Group 2 } Flowering is enhanced if cut back 6 to 8 inches to a pair of strong buds in March.

Group 3 } Prune yearly in March to 12" from the ground. The vine will rapidly re-generate and be in full bloom by late summer/early fall.

Don't know to which group your clematis belongs? Observe the plant for a year and decide accordingly.

Question #3

How does one pronounce **clematis**? From the best I can figure out, how you pronounce it depends on where you are from. Clematis came to America mostly from England, so some pronunciations are thereby influenced. But either cle-MA-tis or CLEM-atis or CLEM-uh-tiss is correct. I prefer cle-MAT-tis; feels best on the tongue.

Klema is from the Greek meaning "a twig." They are also called "Wire Lotus," "Travelers-Joy," and "Virgin's Bower."

Sweet Autumn Clematis

My favorite clematis is one I didn't even know was a clematis until friend Phyllis Davis identified it for me. I was telling her about this pretty, easy to grow vine I had transplanted from Kansas, which made wonderfully fragrant showy white blossoms in late summer/early fall, right when my garden didn't have much else blooming. I knew it by its common names "Madeira Vine" or "Old Man's Beard." She knew right away it was "Sweet Autumn" (*Ranunculaceae, Clematis terniflora*), Group 3.

A happy "Sweet Autumn" likes mostly sun to partial shade, needs regular watering, but doesn't like being over watered, and responds well to hard pruning early in the spring.

Very little bothers this great vine, but always once a year, it attracts what I have come to identify as the ashgray "blister beetle" (*Epicauta fabricii*). A huge swarm of them appear on the vines suddenly, and if not powdered with Sevin immediately, they will chomp strip through the entire growth overnight. Other clematis varieties trellised adjacent to the Sweet Autumn are not bothered, nor anything else in my garden. Weird.

Additional pleasures with "Sweet Autumn" is the attractive foliage that performs well for flower arranging and the fuzzy, attractive spent flower pods that produce the "Old Man's Beard" look.

No garden is complete without a cle-MAT-is or two, or three. These awesome vines are great for providing a wide range of colors, fragrance, and camouflaging eyesores or accenting garden spaces throughout the season.

How's your garden growing?

Bea Patterson

Pick-Me-Up Greenhouse

bp15624@alltel.net

Whisler's Hunting & Fishing Report

by Josh Whisler
Photos provided by Author

Fishing:

The Missouri River dropped several feet in the last month. And with the high temperature - a couple of days hitting 100 degrees - the fish aren't wanting to play either. Flathead action has closed down to just one here and one there. Not like a few weeks ago where they were hitting every thing you threw at them. The temperature of the river today is 85 degrees and that means a couple of things to me: "The fish are in the deep holes cooling off & they're coming out to eating at night". Night fishermen that hang with it are doing all right with big Blues and Flathead alike. "What are they hitting on?" The big ones are hitting chubs & gold fish. Remember Big Bait, Big Fish, so the bigger the bait the better. The little ones are still hitting on night crawlers but there are a lot of trash fish & bait robbers stealing your bait during the daylight hours. If you feel like trying something a little cooler - try fishing at night. The bugs aren't the greatest right now but if you use plenty of bug spray with DEET. I think your chances of bringing home a big one in the morning are pretty good.

Hunting:

It's time to get out the ol' 22 rifle and get it sighted in for squirrel season. Squirrel Season started the first of August. It's funny, but you see them moving around a lot this time of year for some reason. It's early for the nuts to ripen and fall from the trees but I think there is a lot territorial rights that have to be established due to the new squirrel litters in the woods. I've been hearing a lot chattering going on right in my back yard, so the fight is already on. I hope to get out and get a mess of young ones early. Fried squirrel and 90-weight gravy over bread with a side of sweet corn sounds pretty good to me right now.

Attention!! Nebraska Residents can still apply for fall deer hunting permits.

Permits may be obtained by stopping at NGPC Offices, Online (<http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/hunting/guides/biggame>), and/or by Mail at:

NEBRASKA BIG GAME PERMITS
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
P.O. Box 30370
Lincoln, NE 68503-0370



Summer is here but soon enough, Fall will be showing up with a whole new string of hunting seasons. Fish for now but start thinking about dusting off those firearms. It will be here before you know it. 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."



This month's fishing pictures are of David McConnaughey with a couple of Flatheads and James Reeves hoisting a monster Blue Cat.



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VIEW FROM THE VINEYARD

by Ron Heskett

“Run for cover! Danger lurks overhead! Our neighbors are screaming warnings! Let’s get out of here!” Well, at least I hope that is the reaction of the local bird population in the vicinity of the vineyard. You see, about five days ago as the grapes were starting veraison (stage at which the grape clusters start turning colors), I placed the electronic Bird Guard in the vineyard to scare off the potential feathered grape robbers. In random sequence it emits distress calls of five bird species and one harassment sound similar to our sparrow hawk. I had excellent results with this device last year.

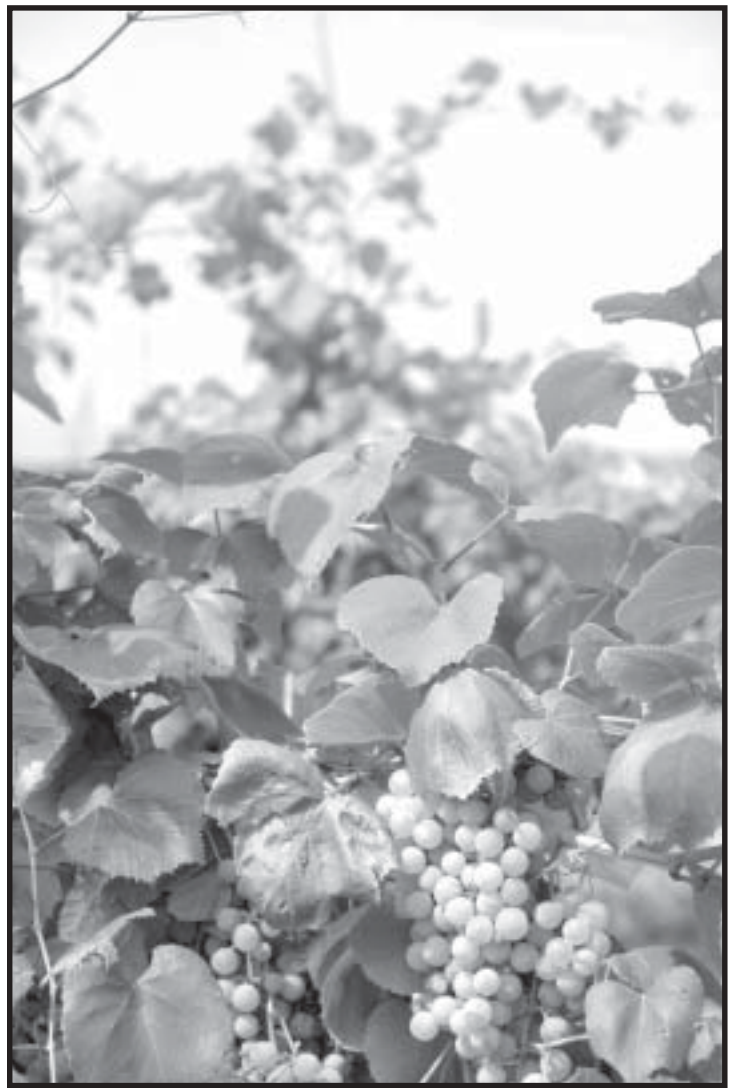
In about ten days or less (today is July 24) harvest will be underway with the picking of the Edelweiss grapes. Different varieties will then mature at various times over a span of about 45 days. So we will be quite busy crushing, pressing, and fermenting grapes to create this year’s vintage wines. The dryness this year may cut into your yields somewhat, but the flavors should be more concentrated in the berries to create some great wines.

As I strolled down the east row of my June plantings at dusk and peered westward, I could see by the silhouettes in the grow-tubes how much growth has taken place. Several of the vines have already emerged about a foot out of the top of the 30" tubes. Matthew (my 14-year old) and I had hand-watered each new vine twice after planting prior to these last three most welcome one-inch rains. Hopefully the roots will reach down rapid enough that no further watering will be necessary.

This year I followed a very rigorous spray schedule for controlling the fungal diseases in the vineyard. By rotating four different sprays and spraying every two weeks the diseases have been held in check. The two table grape varieties, Reliance and Canadice, look very good this year. I have seen hardly any insect damage, so no insecticides have been sprayed. Hopefully, the beneficial critters have been outnumbering the varmints.

On the winery front (For those of you that don’t know me, I am also the vintner for Whiskey Run Creek Winery.), our expansion project to the north of the production facility for storing of bottled inventory is progressing. Not as quickly as we had hoped, but progressing. This will open up the production area to facilitate the processing of this and future years’ grapes. I have just finished making raspberry wine and the apple wine is nearing completion. These two wines will then be blended to create our popular Apple Raspberry wine.

As I walk down to the house from the vineyard, the frogs croak merrily around the duckweed covered pond, crickets chirp, locusts’ resonating sounds fill the air, and the birds emit their last short calls of the day from the safety of the shelterbelts. Soon the rewards of a year’s worth of toiling among the vines will be reaped and the planning for the next year will begin.



Ron Heskett harvested these grapes along with family members and other helpers on July 27th. The grapes will make Edelweiss wine at the *Whiskey Run Creek Vineyard & Winery*.

<p>COUNTRY BROOMS</p> <p>EVERLASTING</p> <p>Merrill Johnson Broom Squire</p> <p>Parlor Brooms Whisk Brooms Birdbath Scrubbers Camper Brooms Cobweb Brooms Hearth Brooms</p>	 <p>Broom Maker</p>
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Of Misery, Madness, and Miracles

by
Vicki Harger

Window on Fifth Street

This issue marks the beginning of *Your Country Neighbor's* sixth year of publication. During this five year journey of publishing I have become less of a reporter and more of a photographer, being in the very fortunate position of being able to choose what I want to do. This transition was allowed in part, by having so many 'country neighbor' writers supplying articles, and by so many readers asking for more pictures.

Another task I enjoy is piecing together all the articles, ads and pictures the week before publishing. It's like putting together a jigsaw puzzle without the picture on the box, but not as difficult, because there are so many ways that the end product can come out. In fact, if it were not for deadlines, I would still be 'tweaking' this issue, trying to make it perfect.

Now and then I include an editorial of sorts when I feel motivated, but *Window on Fifth Street* is my preferred task when it comes to writing. I try to express my view of Small Town, America for those who may not have noticed or appreciated the beauty in their community, particularly rural living. I guess it's kind of a "count your blessings" approach to viewing your surroundings. Or maybe an increased nostalgic awareness. A lot of my appreciation for the country is due to memories of growing up on a Nebraska farm, memories renewed after leaving for the big city after college, and then returning to alfalfa fields, windmills, and Meadowlarks along a quiet, dirt-surface road.

Cornfields, however, are not what they used to be. I am awed each time I drive by perfect emerald green fields in July. A country bonus in recent years has been the amazingly beautiful Autumn foliage around this area, and I am looking forward to photographing October like never before. But until then, I've got summertime in the country, and I've got my window on Fifth Street.

Sometimes you have to lose a lot, just so you can learn to be grateful. That's the lesson I learned, not long ago....

Things hadn't been all that terrific on the farm, but then abruptly my luck seemed to change. I felt elated. Soon, this ol' farm gal was going to be riding around in a sporty convertible. The car of my dreams! I'd found it advertised in the newspaper and I was more than excited.

I waved to my daughter as I climbed into my Mom's car. "Soon we'll be back in that convertible!" I called.

My daughter waved from the doorway of the farmhouse, then I saw her expression freeze. "Wait!" she yelled. "Don't go, yet. I think I hear some dogs barking out in the goat pasture."

My heart plummeted. I could hear it, too—a distant racket coming from the back of the pasture near the pond. Dear God, no! Not again! Just last fall, we'd lost half of our herd when a couple of dogs ran our goats into the pond. Goats can't swim. They sink like rocks and drown. It couldn't be happening, again!

But the sound was unmistakable. The barking grew louder. Kicking off my high heels, I hiked up my skirt and began to run, my bare feet pounding against the rough ground.

No, no, no, I panted with each step. This can not be happening. But it was. As I neared the pasture, I could see a couple of goats huddled miserably on the banks of the pond. And in the water—I came to a sudden stop, panting. In the pond were the floating bodies of half the herd. Every one of the milk goats. Angel, and the mischievous Buddy Boy. Two of my bottle-fed babies were there, as well. The only ones still alive were a couple of dazed billies, bobbing nearby in the water, their chins hooked over a floating tree branch—their eyes crazed with fear.

And there! There at the back of the pasture were the wretched varmints who had caused all this carnage. I began to run toward the dogs, screaming, my heart nearly bursting with fury. I ran blindly, enraged—but in the middle of my mad pursuit, a lucid thought broke through. I was chasing away the very evidence that we needed to recoup our losses for the dead goats.

My shrieks died away, and in an instant I began calling to the dogs, instead. It seemed utter absurdity, but I was desperate. "Come here, sweeties. Aren't you wonderful, you big brutes. Come here...."

By some kind of divine intervention, one of the dogs actually slowed and looked back at me over her shoulder. Then, miracle of miracles, she turned and made her way back toward me, wriggling playfully as she came. When she reached me, my hand closed over her collar. I had her!

Removing the dog tag from her collar, I pocketed it, then quickly tied the dog to a tree and went to help rescue the drowning billies.

The rest of the day slid by in a blur. We pulled the goats out of the pond, dried their fur and gave them shots for their bite wounds. But nothing could soothe the wounds in my own spirit...Not even when the dogs' owners arrived and made restitution for all the carnage. There seemed to be a hole inside of me that nothing could fill.

All of my babies were dead. Never again would they climb on me, jostling about as they vied for their favorite position on my lap. My beloved Baby Girl was missing. We hadn't yet found her body amongst the weeds. She might be lying out there somewhere suffering—dying a slow death. I felt heartsick. "Lord," I said. "If you can just help me find my Sweet Baby Girl!" But there was no sign of Sweet Baby.

The final blow came later in the day when the phone rang in the farmhouse. An irate gentleman was on the line, informing me that he couldn't wait any longer. He was selling the convertible to another buyer. The convertible! I'd forgotten all about it.

I hung up the receiver slowly, and stared out the window. The sun was sinking toward the western horizon. Day was done. The birds were singing their bedtime songs, and the crickets were beginning to chirp.

Lord, I said. If this hurts so bad, how do other people endure even greater losses? The people who lost everything in the Katrina storm—their loved ones, houses, cars, jobs and all of their possessions. How do they survive such sudden devastation?

I walked outside and went to the barnyard—the place I'd spent countless hours nursing feeble babies back to health. Everything looked strange to me, now. The half-eaten salt block. The abandoned baby bottle. A hacksaw lay on the ground where I'd dropped it. I'd never need to use the hacksaw again to free Angel's horns from the fence. And I'd never need the baby bottle to feed my Sweet Baby.

My thoughts came to a stop and I gasped. Suddenly, unexplainably, she was there. I stared at her, open-mouthed. It was strange that she would appear out of nowhere. She was unscathed. She bounced out of the weeds and stood there looking at me.

"Sweet Baby Girl!" I ran to her. "Where have you been?" She tossed her head, then nipped at me playfully as she climbed into my lap. She was a miracle. A living, breathing miracle. The pain and heartache inside me began to ease.

I gave the little nanny a hug. "Guess we'll be needing that baby bottle after all, Sweet Baby..."

Together, we watched the sun sink below the horizon. It was a poignant moment—one I won't forget. A bittersweet moment suspended in time.

Thank you, Lord, for giving me back my Baby. And thank you for all of the little miracles of this dreadful day...For the return of that dog when I called. For the willingness of the dog owners to make restitution for our losses.

Unlike others, I still have my home, my family and my job. I still have my Sweet Baby Girl, and my sanity. Well...I'm not sure about my sanity—but I have everything else.

For that, dear Lord, I am grateful. So grateful.

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It's summertime! And that means that in any given week there are likely to be sidewalk sales, freedom celebrations, county fairs, parades or other celebrations in Smalltown, America.
Get on the road!

Tractor Talk...Part II

by Jon Oliver

“He said that there is a green mailbox at the end of the drive.” I told my dad, relaying Ted’s message. My dad flicked another cigarette out the window.

We were driving north, about fifteen miles west of Lincoln. I looked up and saw the mailbox on the right side of the driveway. Then I looked up and saw it; the fruit - or tractor - of my labor. The one thing I was looking for through so many pages of classified ads. It was beautiful. Now I try to think I am a fairly rough and tumble guy, but I can’t think of to many other words that could describe this machine. It was brightly painted and held in its tractor grasp a John Deere Model 45 loader that had a cob bucket six feet wide.

My dad said:

“That’s a nice lookin’ tractor.”

My mouth, still held open in awe of the tractor, collected limestone dust as the truck’s dust cloud from the gravel settled around us. We pulled into the drive and saw what appeared to be a JD H or B body sticking out of the ground. It was the upper half of a tractor. I was thoroughly impressed by this. I will never know if it was a clever “above-ground lawn ornament of significant farm style” or if there really was a tractor stuck in that ground fifteen miles west of Lincoln.

We met the owner of the tractor, Ted, in his driveway and shook hands. We looked all around the tractor, picking, fingering, gouging, testing, and shaking; and then Ted started it up. The 60 ran pretty smooth and as fair as a John Deere can run. Ted asked me if I wanted to drive it and I said yes. I turned it around, drove out the drive, and up the road. I noticed the steering was getting rougher and rougher and soon the front tire was completely flat: small problem. I got back and Ted filled up the tire with a small air bubble and we settled the deal over the hood of his truck.

This tractor was good and I was getting a nice looking loader with a few small problems. The trip didn’t work very well and it needed new bucket springs but nothing major. To this day, even after paying it off, I can’t decide whether or not I paid too much. I purchased that 60 for \$2900 with the bucket. The tin along with everything else was straight and it was painted up very nicely. The PTO has not been fixed to this day but that was a small problem at the time. My biggest problem lay ahead, the miles and miles of open country. The rolling hills of southeast Nebraska were the biggest problem I have had with that tractor.

After settling with Ted, I took off south the same way Dad and I had come. The first few miles were not bad at all. Even the first twenty miles were not bad. I thought I made pretty good ground after we stopped at a small gas station just outside Lincoln. Dad filled up a red gas can and we checked the oil, fuel, air cleaner, and greased it for the first time. I was back on the road by about 11:00 in the morning. I could really see Lincoln unfolding before me as the Capital building was in front of me for what seemed like days at the rate I was going. I finally headed north with dad in front of me holding back his Ford truck and watching me drive. Dad was my path-finder throughout the whole trip around Lincoln. He would drive up ahead for a couple miles and then drive back and tell me where to go next. I still owe him for that! I found myself in a residential area and then minutes later stopped at a full-fledged intersection in town with cars in back of me and cars behind me waiting to turn! I saw many people laughing and others staring in utter awe of why I was on this thing in car traffic. I think at that point I asked myself the same question.

I headed through another residential area and then through my first of three construction zones that sprang up before me due to my slow speed. I headed off down Cornhusker highway and went by the Kawasaki plant and went near Waverly. Somewhere around there I got into a little trouble with my second construction zone where I had to make a split second decision to turn in front of an oncoming semi-truck while one barreled behind me about a mile back. Orange cones about four-feet high dotted the lanes and only one lane was open on each side with a three feet drop-off where the new lanes would be. I was stuck in the middle of two very long and large chunks of metal that were not going to stop for a dimwit on a tiny green tractor. I pushed in on my left brake, it barely worked - big problem. The trucks were still coming: bigger problem. By the shear grace of the Lord and the science of a distance, time, and space I was able to avoid the oncoming and end-going trucks by the distance of less than a hair on the rear of a knat.

After regaining my regular heart rate and saying one last thankful prayer I was heading into what was the lee side of my journey...the descending leg of the giant hump that was Lincoln. Dad and I stopped at a truck stop that I forgot the name of, on a street I didn’t think would ever end. We both ate quick and burned our mouths on fried chicken, but got back on the road. Dad went on ahead again and found some rather “hilly” but scenic country for me to drive my new purchase.

To be right honest, I never saw the first hill coming...

.....*Jon’s ‘Tractor Trek’ will be continued in the next issue.....*

WORKING AT THE FACTORY

by Devon Adams

They all wear the same uniform,
an olive gray crossed with black lines
that enclose pale greens and yellows
in tiny geometric shapes.
No one stops to rest
and their bodies move in patterns
cut by genes and DNA.
The complex is immense
where work is done in shifts
that never have an end
and demanding deadlines require
compliance with strict quotas.
No one has vacation time and
when the workers need to sleep
they simply die,
and others do their jobs.
These are tiny lives that live
for short duration in the summer
on a tree that stands fifty feet high
and spreads its branches wide
with leaves so densely packed that
rain is not allowed to penetrate
and horses use the cover
as a green roofed barn.
Through the growing season
the factory sees the multitudes
of insects crawl up and down its trunk
and lay their eggs and eat the green
until the leaves are only lace,
transparent in the light.
But by then the tree has laid
its own eggs by sending seeds
to fly with wings attached that
spiral to the ground,
a signal to the sun
that summer’s work is nearly done.
Soon the tree will be bare bones
and the factory will close.
Next year another generation
will climb in endless repetition
of the tasks assigned and
the factory will be in operation.

Diary of an Unemployed Housewife

By Merri Johnson

Dateline: Kewaunee, Wisconsin

Today is my husband's 55th birthday. We're spending it on the shore of Lake Michigan. We came here to visit our daughter and son-in-law, and it just worked out that his birthday fell during our visit.

The same thing happened five years ago when his 50th birthday landed in the middle of our visit to his sister in Oregon. That year we rented a red convertible and drove down the Oregon coast from Portland. I interpreted that road trip in a red convertible as a sort of "vaccination" against mid-life crisis, so I didn't put up too many objections to the extra cost.

My husband's niece's 18th birthday was the same day as his, so as a gift to her, he let her take the convertible for a drive on the high desert roads that hug the hillsides around her home at Klamath Falls. (If the car rental company only knew!)

This year, his birthday is more subdued: he woke up feeling tired. I jokingly blamed it on turning 55. More likely, being on the go the past seven days and sleeping in a strange bed is the reason, although my wifely paranoia has kicked in a little bit with thoughts of middle-age maladies. But that's a topic for another day.

Right now, he's fishing from the dock at Kewaunee Harbor, as the setting sun spreads a sheen in shades of lavender and mango on the mingled waters of Lake Michigan and the Kewaunee River. The boats are coming in, parading past our little dock. A nice cabin cruiser leads the way, followed by half a dozen fishing boats with earnest sportsmen on board, some still stowing their gear, reluctant to surrender to the night chill and darkness.

My husband came on this trip prepared to fish if the opportunity arose, but he could "take it or leave it," he said. Until last night, when our son-in-law and two other avid fishermen took him walleye fishing on Green Bay. They caught their limit, plus my husband caught a 4-pound cat, which his companions told him to throw back. He hasn't fished on the Missouri River at home for over 15 years; then he comes to Green Bay and catches a catfish.

Haze has obscured the horizon all day, and the fading light has dulled the distinction between water and sky on the big lake even more. The fog hasn't penetrated the harbor yet, though a mist hangs in the trees. And the sun's glow has been replaced by golden shimmering columns of reflected street lamps. Gulls are squawking and skimming the surface, expecting maybe some discarded bait or fish guts.

A historical marker behind the bench I'm sitting on tells me that a box car ferry service used to run from this harbor, loading out its first cargo of flour on November 27, 1892. Shipbuilding used to be big here, too. The U.S.S. Pueblo, captured by North Korea in 1968, was built here. Today, Kewaunee's harbor is used more for recreation than industry. I think I'm glad for that. We probably wouldn't be sitting here otherwise, mesmerized by the blue water rippling in the gentle wake of the returning fishing boats, in the last light of my husband's birthday.

Seneca to Welcome

Women With

"Hattitude!"

by Penny Zeller



On Saturday, Aug. 19, Seneca businesses will roll out the "red" carpet in welcome of 'red hatters.'

The local chapter of the Red Hat Society will host a regional tea at the Nemaha County, Kansas, Community Building beginning at 1 p.m. that afternoon. Prior to the tea, those attending will have the opportunity to take advantage of many "Red Hat Specials" at Seneca stores. Stores offering specials will be marked with a red hat sign in the door or window. Participating tea registrants are asked to wear their red/pink hats so clerks can recognize the ladies as 'hatters. Red Hatters are also invited to take part in a "poker run." Cards may be picked up at stores displaying a red hat topped with a Royal Flush. The best poker hand presented at the afternoon tea will be the grand prizewinner.

If you are a 'red hatter' and would like to participate in the days activities and attend the tea, late registrations will be taken through Tuesday, Aug. 8, as space allows. To register, or for more information, contact Jan Bergman at 785-336-2483.



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The Face of Drought

A Report from Western Nebraska

by Karen Ott

A day of rest, that's what Sunday was. It was unusually cool for July, chilly enough for jackets and misty enough for some folks to carry umbrellas as they wandered the grounds of the county's Farm and Ranch museum. Like us, most museum visitors had come to see the herd of longhorns, trucked in from 'away' for Gering's Oregon Trail Days celebration. The cattle were rangy and whip-thin, long-legged and narrow hipped, with colorful hides splotted with stripes, flecks, and blotches. On the hoof they were a pretty bunch but I'd bet the farm they'd make a tough set of steaks. One of the cowboys remarked the herd was gentle enough, but that they were "still cows." And that said it all.

We didn't stay long; we had water to set and chores to do. But for a little while we escaped from home, from work, from drought...just the two of us...alone. What a luxury.

As July wears on temperatures continue to climb, each day hotter than the last. The mornings begin fresh and cool but by noon the distant horizon turns yellow-white and shimmers with heat. The oppressive air hangs hot and heavy. Clouded with dust from passing cars it irritates the eyes and sticks to sweaty skin causing it to prickle with heat rash.

By late afternoon the dogs retreat to the coolest corner of the yard, the cats lie motionless on the cushion of our green wooden porch swing, and the window screens on the shady side of the house turn black with corral flies too lazy to move. It's high summer on the Great Plains.

And it's dry. Sunday's mist didn't even float the dead fly in the bottom of the rain gauge. Mitchell irrigation district delivered a small amount of water this week but shut down all head gates today. By this evening the ditches were dry again. We're not certain what comes next...there may be a bit more water left in the system.... maybe not. The district can deliver only three inches of storage water this year...and that's as close to nothing as you can get.

I'm sick and tired of drought, of not having enough water to finish a crop, of always scratching for money to pay this bill or that.

I feel as if I'm living two lives. An outer one veneered by a surface courage kept dusted and polished more for Dale's sake than my own, and an inner one, shadowed by a fear of failure, a fear of not being tough enough to finish this journey we're on. I keep this one hidden from the world...and sometimes, if truth be told, even myself.

I am powerless before drought: I can't make it rain or call water from a rock as Moses did for the complaining children of Israel, I know that. But knowing it doesn't seem to be enough. I collect worries like rare antiques. I have warehouses full.

But tonight I won't be wandering those warehouse aisles....I'm heading off to bed...and sleep.

Life is still good...just hard. Maybe tomorrow it will rain.



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Our Trip

by Joe Smith

On Tuesday, the 20th of June, we started for Colorado. We told a friend we would come out and teach a dowsing class all day for his club. The all-day program was to be at Montrose, Colorado, on Saturday the 24th. Our friends had a cabin on their farm west of Montrose that we stayed in. They are gentlemen farmers. They needed some help so you can guess what we did while we were there. We did get a couple of days of fishing in, even caught some. All-in-all we had a good time, and taught a lot of dowsing and healing while we were there.

It was very hot on the way out there. Temperature was around 109 in Kansas. We dodged a couple of twisters on the way; just had a sprinkle of rain. It took a couple of days to drive out. We're getting to the age we don't pass a chance to use the bathroom and do a little walking, stretch our legs a little so to speak. There was a time not too long ago I would drive the distance in one day. We can't do that anymore. So twelve hours is enough.

We did some sight-seeing. We went down to the Black Canyon; what a sight. The engineers cut a hole five miles long under a mountain, which would be a big job any time, but they did it in early 1900, completed it in 1909. They still use it to furnish water to the Montrose side of the mountain from the Gunnison side. Gas prices ran from \$2.75 to \$3.15. It does not take long to use up a hundred dollar bill.

We then went down to an Indian site near Dolores, Colorado. That was really interesting. Then we drove on down to Durango. We settled in for some R&R and did a little site-seeing, and of course we walked through a lot of shops. We drove up to Silverton and spent a day up there wandering around. We had been there before on the train. If you never rode the narrow gauge from Durango to Silverton, do it. It is an amazing trip on an old steam engine train. You don't have a lot of time to look around though. We made it home about noon this Saturday, July 1, our 55th wedding anniversary.

We had a bunch of calls to answer and a lot of email to answer. Seems I was named the dowser of the year by the American Society of Dowsers, so I got a lot of congratulation emails and phone calls. It was a complete surprise to me. This retirement life is sure busy. Looks like I'm going to have to make a list to get anything done. Joe

The Weekend, July 6,7,8,9

by Joe Smith

It was one of those looong weekends but a lot of fun. First, Marta's brother came from New Mexico to see us. We went out to supper at Arbor Manor on Friday night, then went to Brownville, Saturday. Sunday we had a family get-together with my grandson, his beautiful wife, and three wonderful kids. We had a cookout of hamburgers and polish dogs. Of course with the two young boys here we had to have tractor rides.

We got out the drums and let the kids have a pow-wow and call up some rain. Sunday morning a friend from Texas stopped by to visit. She is a shaman and a healer besides many other things. She had some ideas on how to get some rain also. We put all those to work and woke up to rain this morning. Something helped out somewhere.

After Josh's family left, we watched our friend work on Marta's neck and back with a new method she learned in Tibet. Sandy Mac is the lady's name. We have known her for many years. She is a teacher at a lot of the conferences we go to, and a wonderful person. She went to Tibet and China in May with a lady named Madi Nolan, who is also a teacher of healing. Sandy had all the pictures she had taken on DVDs, so we spent a while last night viewing the pictures as she told about them. China is not what I thought it was. It is not a backward country. The cities are very modern and they have a lot of big buildings in all their cities. They teach English in their schools and Sandy says a lot of people speak good English. A lot of signs are in English as well as Chinese. Tibet was more like what I thought China was going to be like. The group they were with spent over two weeks over there. Just the idea of doing that is awesome to me, not knowing what to expect. Sandy says that the people are all friendly and nice. It was a down-to-earth tour, not just the high spots. It gives you a different view of China. It seems people are just people everywhere, just trying to get through life.

Where we gave the workshop in Colorado, there were a couple of the people that had been on the same tour; small world isn't it? Several of the pictures that a lady had taken showed outlines of spirits in the photos. Sandy had a couple of the like also. It was very interesting. Some looked like wisps of smoke while others looked like a Buddha statue super-imposed like a double negative. On one picture of a site in China, it

showed this lady's friend beside her at the site they were at, but that lady didn't go on the trip??? Kinda deep even for me.

So as you can tell we had quite a weekend, Sandy and I found a well site for a fellow during the day also. He mentioned another site I had dowsed for a man in Humboldt that came in okay. Not a big well but in that area any well is a good one. Joe

DETRIMENTAL ENERGY

by Joe Smith

People seem to be a little interested in dowsing, so I'll tell you about one important use of dowsing. The earth is covered with geopathic grids. I think there may be over forty different types. I'm just going to talk about three of these. The Curry Zones, found by a Dr. Curry in Germany some years ago, the Hartman Lines, and the EMF's. EMF's are man-made, consisting of Microwaves, cell phone towers, high lines and a few more. These energies in connection with an underground water vein cause a bad energy zone that affects your immune system. The ability to dowse allows people to find these zones and evaluate them as to how bad they are and what to do about them. Each person is different as to how much of this energy they can stand before it affects them.

After you go to the Doctor's office and he does his thing to help "cure you", then you go right back to the same place where you got sick in the first place. Energy zones have been studied for centuries, it's nothing new. I didn't dream this up just for you to laugh at this old fool.

Think about where the cat likes to sleep. If it is on the foot of your bed, you probably have leg or foot problems. If the cat likes to sleep on the head of the bed, you might have head aches and neck and upper back problems. If your energy leaves you about midday, you could have the same problem. These geopathic zones cover the earth in a pattern.

The Curry zones travel in a 45 degree angle, to the North, South, East, and West. While the Hartman lines run N-S and E-W. If by chance you bed is over a couple of the crossings of these grids, that is not good. Throw a water vein under that and you now have a bad energy zone I call a "9a detrimental zone".

In Germany they did some mapping and recording of different houses that they called Cancer houses. It seems that even trees will lean themselves to get away from bad zones. We have three fruit trees close to the high line and all three lean as far to the north as they can to get away from that energy that the high lines throw off. If you have a hedge row with a low place in it, or some areas in your garden that refuse to grow any thing, that is the reason. If you have a place where the ants keep coming back no matter how many times you put out poison, that is where there is a detrimental energy zone. When your immune system gets weak you are a target for many problems, one being cancer.

I am really going out on a limb just trying to tell you about this problem we all have. I might have a little problem proving what I say here but I think enough Doctors have studied this and wrote books about the effects on several continents. The Chinese have a law that no one builds a home before it is checked out by a qualified person. This has been going on for several hundred years. And we think they are backward.

There are many ways to correct the problems of these zones. It probably would require some classes to show you how to find these zones. There is no way I could check everyone's home, best just to teach you how to do it yourself. If some of you decide I know what I'm talking about then set up a group and I will come and we will carry this discussion further.

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CASTOR OIL

Ursula Waln, N.D.

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Castor oil is the oil extracted from the castor bean plant (*Ricinus communis*), also known as the Palma Christi. Castor oil is widely known as a cathartic (strong laxative) when used internally, but it also has tremendous healing properties when used externally. The use of castor oil is found in medical references dating back to ancient civilizations. In the Ebers Papyrus (1550 B.C.) castor oil was suggested as eye drops for eye irritations. Edgar Cayce, the so-called sleeping prophet, suggested the use of castor oil for more than fifty different conditions of illness. Castor oil has been used successfully to treat abscesses, bursitis, constipation, whip lash, muscle sprains, low back pain, abrasions, lacerations, infected puncture wounds, fibroid tumors, arthritic conditions, local infections, surgical wounds, and many other conditions.

While it is not known exactly how castor oil works, research has shown that castor oil has a profound influence upon the lymphatic system and the autonomic nervous system. As castor oil is absorbed through the skin and moves through the lymphatic channels, it appears to stimulate the body to break up any congestion present. Since much of the pain and swelling from injury is due to decreased lymph drainage in the affected area, this action of castor oil on the lymphatic system makes it a valuable therapeutic tool for first aid.

For acute injuries and infections, spread castor oil directly on the affected area or make a fomentation by pouring castor oil onto a piece of flannel and applying the flannel to the affected area. Cover with plastic wrap, a plastic bag, or an oil cloth. This, in turn, may be covered with a towel or old clothing. If the skin is sensitive to plastic, use a paper towel between the skin and the plastic wrap. For arms and legs, a plastic bag with the end cut off works well. An old sock with the toe cut off makes an ideal outer bandage. The heel of the sock fits an elbow perfectly, or a knee if a stretchy sock is chosen. *Do not apply heat to acute injuries.*

FIRST-AID USES OF CASTOR OIL

For Sprains, Strains, Fractures, Bruises:

Castor oil, applied topically can greatly reduce the pain, swelling, and discoloration due to soft tissue injury. Apply castor oil directly to the affected area, or use a castor oil fomentation. Continue treatment for up to 48 hours applying more oil as it is absorbed by the body.

For Infected Wounds:

Cover the wound with a castor oil fomentation (as described above). Change the dressing at least twice daily. Continue until the inflammation is relieved. (Caution: Seek professional care for severe or non-responsive infections.)

For Chapped or Irritated Skin:

The emollient properties of castor oil make it excellent for soothing chapped lips and dry or irritated skin.

For Non-Penetrating Eye Injuries:

Castor oil may be used for any non-penetrating injury to the eye. It will help prevent bruising and bleeding resulting from a blow to the eye. A few drops placed in the eye will bring almost immediate relief from the pain caused by snow blindness or a scratched eyeball. When there is a foreign body in the eye, castor oil will help move it to the corner of the eye while protecting the eye from scratches.

For Ear Infections:

Lightly-warmed castor oil dropped in the ear can lessen the pain caused by infection. (Caution: Do not place *hot* oil in the ear!)

Next month I will describe the use of hot castor oil packs for treatment of chronic conditions. Until then, be well.

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Herbal Remedies

Part Two of Four
by Jeffrey G. Meade, MD

Natural is better . . . herbal remedies work more gently . . . they are safe to use . . . they are the poor man's alternative to prescription medicines. Some of these statements may or may not be true concerning herbal remedies. Certainly, there is evidence that traditional Chinese doctors have used many herbs for thousands of years. But some of the modern day uses differ from those of old.

A New York Times report showed that more than \$27 billion annually is spent on alternative medicine. In 2004, an estimated 48 percent of U.S. adults claimed they used at least one alternative treatment, including herbal remedies. This is up from 42 percent in 1994. Of some concern is that herbal formulations do not go through pre-market toxicity testing by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to assure safety or efficacy. There are over 1,500 different herbal medicines sold as dietary supplements or traditional ethnic medicines. Compared to 12,000 medicines dispensed last year at a cost of \$248 billion. However, the notion that herbal remedies are not big business is simply not true. Sales of herbal and botanical products totaled about \$4 billion in 2003, according to the latest figures available from the FDA, and are part of the estimated \$18 billion in annual dietary supplement sales in the United States.

The January 1, 2002 issue of the prestigious *Annals of Internal Medicine* ranks the U.S. sales of the six most popular herbs in 1999: ginkgo biloba at \$151 million, St. John's wort at \$140 million, ginseng at \$96 million, echinacea at \$70 million, saw palmetto at \$32 million, and kava at \$17 million. In my last article I talked about echinacea, zinc, and vitamin C. Today I would like to consider a few things about St. John's wort and saw palmetto.

Here are the basics. Saw palmetto is also known as sabal, serenoa, American dwarf palm tree, and cabbage palm. In the past, ripe berries from the dwarf palm were used to enhance sperm production and to enlarge breast size. The herb is used today to treat the symptoms of benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH), which is an enlargement of the prostate gland (not due to cancer). It is said to relieve the symptoms of irritable bladder and difficult urination associated with BPH. The scientific data says that there is good evidence, but not proof, that saw palmetto helps this condition. Most of the clinical studies have used 320 mg of the extract, and treatment usually lasted for 3 to 6 months. Few side effects have been reported, but since saw palmetto may affect hormone levels in the body, it should not be used if you have cancer of the prostate, breast, or other sex hormone related diseases.

St. John's wort is also known as *Hypericum perforatum*, klamath weed, John's wort, amber touch-and-heal, goatweed, rosin rose, and milleperituis. It has been used for stomach upset, insomnia, anxiety, and hemorrhoids. It has also been used topically in the treatment of skin inflammation, wounds, burns, and for nerve and muscle pain. Today St. John's wort is considered to be an antidepressant.

Depression will affect nearly one in ten Americans this year and cost them up to \$45 billion in treatment and lost productivity. Depressed individuals have a better than 80% chance of being successfully treated by prescription drugs according to the Ameri-

can Psychiatric Association. However, many people don't seek medical help because of the stigma involved. This often leads to self-medication and the use of herbal remedies. According to research published in the December 11, 1999 issue of the *British Medical Journal*, St. John's wort can help mild depression. And while it proved more effective than a placebo, it was no better than imipramine, an older tricyclic antidepressant that is no longer widely used in the U.S. These studies were conducted in Berlin on 263 moderately depressed people. "What's important is the fact that St. John's wort is better than placebo . . . and that certainly is encouraging that St. John's wort is effective in depression, at least for the short term," says Benedetto Vitiello, MD, of the National Institute for Mental Health, who is now conducting a study at Duke University comparing St. John's wort to Zoloft, a more modern and more effective antidepressant. He also notes that the St. John's wort used in these and other studies may not even be available in the U.S. In Germany, St. John's wort is a prescription and is regulated by government agencies. But no such controls exist in the U.S. because of a 1994 law forbidding the FDA from regulating so-called natural products like St. John's wort. In fact, in Germany, 25 times more prescriptions are written for St. John's wort than for Prozac (a common and effective antidepressant in the U.S.).

So what is the down side? Taken all by itself, St. John's wort appears to be safe and effective in the treatment of mild-to-moderate depression. However, according to the February 12, 2000 issue of the British medical journal *The Lancet*, research has shown St. John's wort to dangerously reduce the effectiveness of the drug cyclosporine, an anti-rejection medication used in transplant patients. It was also found to reduce the effectiveness of the AIDS drug indinavir, as well as a host of drugs used to treat heart disease, high blood pressure, depression, and certain cancers. Estrogen and Viagra may also be affected. This is even more alarming when it is estimated in the November 11, 1998 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, that over 15 million Americans take dietary supplements along with their prescription drugs.

The bottom line is that in mid 2000, the herb manufacturers agreed that consumers should treat dietary supplements with caution. The FDA is already working with prescription drug manufacturers to list the potential interactions with St. John's wort if they are known. But the FDA under current regulations cannot require the makers of St. John's wort to give similar warnings. Under the agreement, the manufacturers of St. John's wort have urged consumers to involve their doctor if they are also on prescription medications.

The concern for possible drug-herb interactions was brought to light in one University of Chicago survey where up to 50 percent of patients scheduled for surgery were using herbal remedies that might have caused surgical complications if their physicians were unaware of their use. And besides, you should always tell you doctor everything that you are taking, including herbs, vitamins, and all dietary supplements, especially if you are having anesthesia or surgery.

Next month I will continue the third of my four part series with a look at ginkgo, ginseng and kava. Until next time, stay healthy!

Second Thoughts

by Frieda Burston

Just because somebody rich or famous says something, doesn't mean it's profound.

Just because somebody in your family says it, doesn't mean it's stupid. Lulu's younger son made a remark the other day that has led me to a lot of thought.

Shai is going to move in and hold my apartment down until a year passes and I see whether I'm resilient enough to live comfortably in a 'pet-rabbit' cage with a couple of hundred other 'pet rabbits'. I am slated to leave for California on July 23, and he will stay here until July 23, '07 comes up.

I was taking him around the apartment to explain things to him, and showed him the dining room windows, their iron grillwork tightly strung with invisible fishing line to keep out the cats. "And does it," he asked? I had to admit, "No, you see here, where a big cat just clawed the fishingline apart and dived in. But I'll have my helper string it back up before I leave."

Shai asked, "If it didn't work the first time, what makes you think it will work the second time?"

I thought that over, and I've been thinking ever since.

I went out and bought plastic netting, and wired it in place instead. Not pretty. But no cats.

The problem with the world is that we're all applying the same old solutions, without asking Shai's question, "If it didn't work the first time, what makes you think it will work the second time?"

What happened here in Israel lately is a good example of the old kind of thinking. Before Sharon's stroke put his brain to sleep, he took the Jewish farmers out of Gaza and took the Israeli army out of Gaza because they no longer had to protect the farmers. Hundreds of thousands of us said that without our soldiers in Gaza to protect Israel, the Arabs would attack Israel itself. We were right. Gaza rockets fall in Israeli bedrooms now. Gaza tunnels bring terrorist attacks inside of Israeli army posts.

Sharon's idea of withdrawal-brings-peace (an extension of the dead Oslo idea of Land-for-Peace) fell flat on its face. It didn't work, the first time. Now Sharon's successor is selling the idea around the world that pulling Jewish farmers and soldiers out of Judea and Samaria too will bring peace to the world. In a pig's eye! If it didn't work in Gaza, what makes us think it will work in the Jordan Valley?

And another example: when the terrorists accuse us of some atrocity, our government apologizes to the world first, before checking the story. By the time the forensics experts have studied it and can prove that the Arabs rigged the story and did it themselves for propaganda purposes, it's too late. The pictures of weeping widows and bloodied children sweep around the world, and who will disbelieve, if our government has already accepted blame? The army had said, when the first accusation came, that records showed this blast came 8 minutes after the last Israeli firing had stopped, but the government went over their heads and apologized immediately

anyway. Why do we keep repeating this mistake? If apologizing before investigating was wrong the first time, why would it be right the second time?

And time after time we let the media tell the world what's happening here, although the media doesn't know just what's happening here. Or maybe doesn't want to know. Why don't we saturate the Net in every language that people speak in Israel, to tell about everybody's reaction to the Hamas killing of the boy who hitchhiked to pray at Joseph's Tomb? He was kidnapped and shot the same night that Hamas kidnapped the soldier. The media didn't tell how angry and afraid the ordinary Israeli is of kidnapping; they feel if it could happen to that boy, it can happen to anyone. The Rabbis have declared it sinful to hitch a ride, but the average Israeli parent is saying "So punish the killers, not the kids!" Forget the media. It didn't work, other times. This time, why can't WE flood the Net?



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Immune System

by Joe Smith

The thing that helps most in any sickness problem is to have a good immune system. A good vitamin system and good herbs, zinc that target your immune system. This system is responsible for keeping us well, keeping down infections, allergies and even cancers. A lot of this depends on the food we eat. We need to enhance our own body's defense systems. If we can build up our white blood cells, that would go a long way to keeping us healthy. Stress, pollution and poor diet are all tied to a lower immune system. A simple thing like watching a funny movie or playing cards with friends or even dancing with your wife, all of these activities lower stress. Laughter is good for the soul and your health. Whenever you get into a "fight or flight" situation your immune system suffers, your white blood cells slow down. Dr. Whitaker says that stress is bad. It affects the thymus gland and actually shrinks it. That inhibits your immune system.

Sugar is one of the main bad boys, it inhibits white blood cell production. If you have an infection, sugar is not the way to go. Personally, I like sweets. It seems I'm going to have to modify my life style somewhat.

Just below the thyroid gland are two small glands, your thymus glands. As we age, they seem to get smaller and are not as active. There is a whole list of things that the thymus does for us but you will have to read the book that I'm getting most of this info from. When I grew up we kinda ran wild and were hardly sick. I imagine I ate a lot of germs as most growing boys do. Our own bodies will if given the chance, build an immunity to a lot of problems. Most of my health problems were self inflicted by accidents of some sort.

Some herbs that help in the care of the immune system are Echinacea, Goldenseal and many others. A good supplier can give you a list of what you could take. One of the main things that will harm your immune system is smoking. That is one thing - like sugar - that we need to live without or limit ourselves. I take Amazon herbs but there are lots of good companies out there. Stay healthy so we can pay these damn state property taxes. Joe Smith



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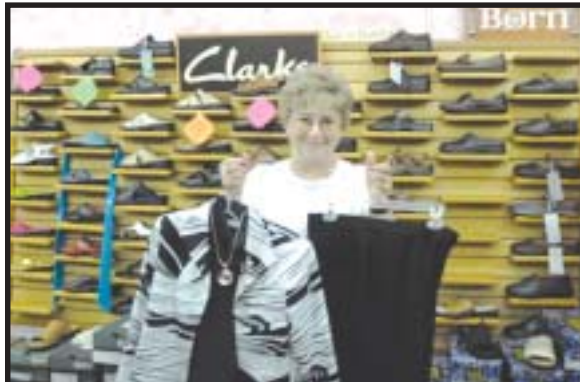
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