

Your *Country* Neighbor

December 2012
FREE!

Auburn•Brownville•Cook•Falls City•Hiawatha•Humboldt•Johnson•Nebraska City•Nemaha•Peru•Rock Port•Sabetha•Syracuse•Tecumseh



Auburn's *Legion Memorial Park*, November 12, 2012

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Voices from your Valley

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Voices from the Valleys of the Nemaha

Writers This Month

Devon Adams
Carol Carpenter
Mary Ann Holland
Merri Johnson
Shirley Neddenriep
Vicki O'Neal
Karen Ott
Marilyn Woerth

Thank You

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Your Country Neighbor
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www.yourcountryneighbor.com

Where to Find Your Country Neighbor

Your Country Neighbor is hand-delivered to grocery stores, pharmacies, hardware stores, restaurants, cafes, and businesses that advertise in this paper.

Find it in the following cities and villages: In **Kansas**; Hiawatha and Sabetha. And in **Missouri**; Rock Port. And in **Nebraska**; Auburn, Brownville, Cook, Falls City, Humboldt, Johnson, Nebraska City, Nemaha, Peru, Syracuse, and Tecumseh.

Past issues are online at: www.yourcountryneighbor.com

NOTICE TO SENIORS

2013 Medicare Part D Plan Comparison/Enrollment Events

Compare 2013 drug plans. Plans change every year, your needs change too. Select a date and location listed below and sign up for a half hour appointment. Changes in drug plans for 2013 cannot be made after Dec. 7. **Previous dates and locations were published in last month's issue; remaining dates and locations are listed below.**

Receive one-on-one assistance from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Educator and trained SHIIP Professional, Mary Ann Holland, at the location of your choice. Appointment required—see contact number for each location. [Husband & wife each need an appointment.]

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

Nov. 27	Nebraska City	The Ambassador	1800 14 th Avenue	9:00-4:00	402-267-2205
Nov. 28	Tecumseh	Ridgeview Towers	1143 N. 3rd Street	9:00-5:00	402-335-3669
Nov. 29	Plattsmouth	Plattsmouth Library	400 Ave. A	9:00-5:00	402-267-2205
Dec. 3	Nebr. City	The Ambassador	1800 14 th Avenue	9:00-4:00	402-267-2205
Dec. 4-7	Weeping Wtr.	Cass Co. Extension	8400 144th St., Ste. 100	9:00-4:00	402-267-2205

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COVER PHOTO

Stephen Hessler

Sunshine and breezes on an early Monday morning presented these colors on November 12, the day this photo (and the one below), was taken; Auburn's Legion Memorial Park.



Legion Memorial Park, November Morning

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HILLS OF CHRISTMAS

Soft with the snow
of a midnight fall,
quiet as a breath
suspended, the hills
by the river waited.
The chilly air was strung
with the flight of feathers
bright with the flashing
light of morning. Across
the field, some perfect cedars
posed, covered with pale blue
berries, and topped with vines
of hot orange bittersweet.
More ornaments arrived, flying
to their perches decked out in
cardinal red, bluejay blue, and
gaudy stripes in black and white
with red hoods on top of their
hammering heads. Little peeps
fluttered in, adding half notes
to the medley of songs. The
company was complete when
the furry critters came, leaving
fancy foot prints pressed in
snow, like signatures on cards
from the wild side of the world.

KINDLING

He gathers a load of seasoned
oak from the fruit cellar. The
house has chilled, as wind kicks
hard at the old boards and finds
cracks to sneak inside. There is a
big stone fireplace, with an iron
grate large enough for logs to be
stacked upon it. Beside the empty
chamber is a bucket of kindling.
Carefully building the pyre is the key,
and he is meticulous in his preparations.
The wood catches the spark, and heat
and light emanate into the room. He
adjusts the damper, and the flames tell
the story of the trees that used to be,
before they were fire.

Poetry by Devon Adams

BLIZZARDS AND BARNS

The cut of the wind is sharp,
like a steel knife in your skin.
Light rain falls into pellets of
sleet before noon. The cold
gets colder and the day gets
darker as the air churns into
white sheets blowing sideways.
The horses are snow ghosts,
plastered and wet, shivering,
as they plod through drifts
up to their knees, heading for
the break of the old barn. It is
quiet inside, and the dirt floor
is soft. They look back out the
wide door at winter, as the weathered
farmer enters, bringing fragrant
brome hay and kind words.

VARNISHED

Like a master craftsman,
the storm had laid a coat
of sealer on the land.
As clear as glass and
as cold as death, the
ice was thick and solid.
Each branch and blade
of grass sagged and bent
from the weight, and as
the wind rose, the trees
groaned and screamed
as their branches were
viciously ripped away.
Cracks and booms echoed
through the hills that would
be double dark in a night
without the lifeline of power
that had been broken from
the rows of shattered poles.
Those folks with wood stoves
were thankful for their flames.

ART BY DEVON ADAMS



LOST VOICES

Freezing fog erased the
lines and shadows of the
landscape at early dawn.
The river's throat was
choked with ice that
bobbed and circled in
the muddy currents, as
it crunched against itself.
Voices floated alone and
lost, separated from the
creatures that spoke to one
other, predator to prey
and victim to survivor.

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HOUSE - (Third of Three on this topic)

by Shirley Neddenriep

Odd that a certified house inspector found more problems with the 'newer' portion of this house than its old section. It may be old by today's standards, it may have steep stairs and pitched roof lines, to say nothing of the plain dirt floor of its cellar/basement, whatever, it is my home. I suppose I will defend it down to its last creak and crack, dragging doors, popcorn ceilings and all.

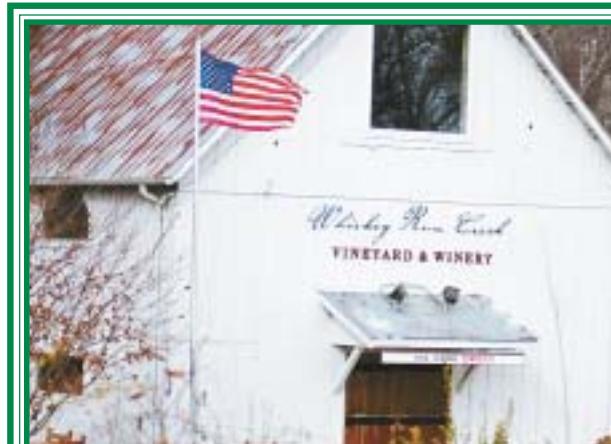
Sometimes if a toaster and a microwave are used at the same time, a breaker shuts off. An electrician told me, "This is normal." Another one said, "This can be dangerous." The solution is to make certain both appliances are on different circuits. I can manage that one.

One day there came no hot water. That is one I can't handle. Had to call a plumber. The hot water heater in place had served for 30 years, believe me. I had the original invoice and instruction manual. The plumbing business who had installed it kept records also and retained them for the new owner when the business changed hands. Those records and our house records matched.

So the 52-gallon AO Smith Residential Electric Water Heater that had served so well, failed at last with corroded thinga-ma-jigs that could not be loosened. One of the two manly plumbers hollered up the stairway. "Do you want to leave the old heater in the cellar?" I did not and was busy at the time with plumbers replacing hot and cold water pipes in another part of the house.

Soon the two burly guys came lugging the 52-gallon heater, minus its load of water, and hauled it away. They could not possibly have carried a loaded heater up the stairs, so they simply dumped the water onto the dirt cellar floor. What else? It being very drought dry, the water began seeping slowly away.

Continued on the next page >>>



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In a few more days the House Inspector appeared on the scene to facetiously (to me) or wryly, observe "the basement area is very wet and to consider drying it." Well, it didn't take long to rectify the old dehumidifier that had been setting in a corner of the cellar neglected since 2010. It had a good cleaning and now sets on an upper shelf that once held canned peaches, pears or tomatoes. The machine is fitted with a submersible pump with plastic hose attached and that hose suspended from overhead floor joists by office binder clips hung from nails driven into the joists. The hose is directed outside via a small aperture in the cellar wall near a window. From there the water-carrying hose meanders across a bit of lawn and drains into a flower bed. There is a timer set on six-hour intervals attached to the pump so that when the dehumidifier bucket is nearly full, the pump activates. The hose is drained now for winter, rolled up and tucked in a window well.

Merry Christmas

Drive Safely

This Holiday Season!

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Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

Thanksgiving is past and Christmas looms. Perhaps you don't like the imagery that *loom-ing* conjures up. Let me remind you of what 21st century Christmas entails. Number one is the big December 25 deadline. I think it's safe to say that in the next three weeks, most women will give in to the cultural expectation of shopping 'til they drop; baking more in December than they bake during the other 11 months of the year combined; attending multiple holiday events because it's the thing to do; adding yet more items to their holiday décor; and maybe even burning the midnight oil writing actual Christmas cards. I suppose I'm naïve to think that many people still engage in that last activity, but it's one that I believe is still worthwhile.

You probably noticed that I singled women out for getting caught up in the holiday frenzy. But men share some blame. They may not participate actively in the shopping, baking, decorating or card signing, but they enjoy the fruits of their women-folks' endeavors. Don't you believe it when they say that don't care about all that stuff, as they snitch from the tray of goodies you're preparing for the church bazaar.

I know it's difficult to resist going along with the crowd on all this. I am really not suggesting that everyone go on strike and refuse to participate. But a little restraint might be a good thing. Here are some things to consider.

Picture Santa lurking around gleefully making note of naughtiness and crossing names off his list. You don't have to go looking for bad behavior, but do you really have to give as many gifts as you do? If you feel compelled to support the economy, just spend more on the *essential* people in your life. You'll save time and stress.

When it comes to cutting back on the baking, you may soon get some "help" from the food police who would like to strictly limit your consumption of sugary treats, including Christmas goodies. If you can't reduce your intake of sweets on your own, they'll be happy to do it for you. Maybe not this year, but perhaps sooner than you think. If you start cutting back now, it won't even feel like an infringement on your personal liberty when they start rationing sugar!

When it comes to events, it seems that the secular and religious world are both conspiring to consume every moment of your time. In addition to the time spent on shopping, baking and decorating, there are school programs and all sorts of holiday concerts and plays you can take in. In my church denomination, it's a veritable marathon of activities with extra mid-week Advent services, children's programs, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services, not to mention Sundays. What's the solution? That is a tough one. I will only recommend that each person do some soul-searching and consider which events truly enhance the season and which ones don't.

That brings me to my final point: Christmas cards. You may bemoan the cost of postage, but think of that card as a gift to the recipient. Use it as an opportunity to say things in writing that you might not say in person, for whatever reason. Choose a card with a message that expresses your true understanding of Christmas and what it means for your family and friends. And please take the time to write a personal note, especially to people whose social life is constricted by age or illness. Sharing love – your own *and* the love of Christ – is the heart of Christmas, and when you consider all the options for doing that, sending a card is a pretty good bargain.



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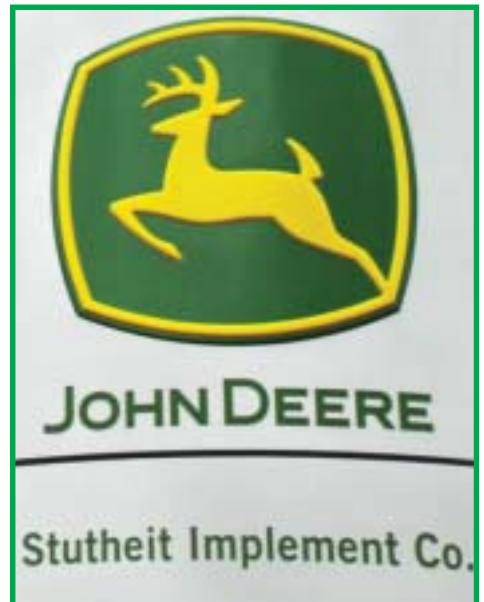


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 (A) '01 JD 680 48" Deck 400 Hrs
 (A) '07 JD X500 54" Deck
 (A) '10 JD X534 54" Deck
 (S) '08 JD X540 54" Deck
 (A) '10 JD Z465 Z-Turn 62" deck
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\$38,800	(S) CiH RBX563 Round Baler	\$23,500
\$1650	(S) '65 JD 4020	\$9500
\$37,500	(A) Landpride 60" Finish Mower	\$795
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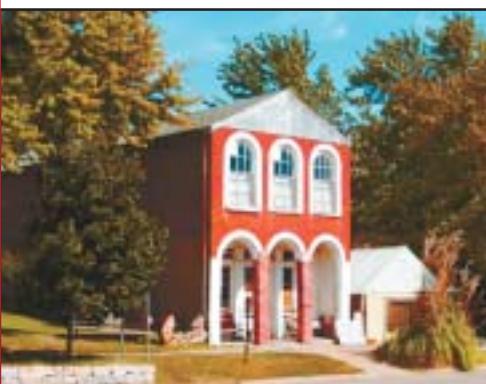
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Red-bellied Woodpecker is around my neighborhood all year.

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Where Life Is Good

Marilyn Woerth

There is a day in my life that I hold very dear to my heart, one of those near perfect days, physically, spiritually, mentally, emotionally, a real family builder: Dec. 25, 1985.

The boys are eight and ten and they don't get up at the crack of dawn any more (just close to it). We had gone to church on Christmas Eve, for we had a special Christmas day planned for the boys. After a frolic through wrapping paper, with hugs, kisses, a quick breakfast, we loaded up the grey mustang with our gear and headed out of town.

After eight years in the navy, some out to sea, Steve had missed our sons so much; we became civilians and moved to Idaho. Beautiful, half wild Idaho. We were headed to Bear Gulch in the Caribou-Targhee National Forest, nestled at the bottom of three mountains with the Snake River winding through them.

As a family, we have been cross-country skiing for several years (downhill was too

expensive). Our line silhouette along the trails always stayed the same, the boys upfront, I tagging behind and Steve somewhere in the middle trying to keep us all in sight.

It was a breathtaking, gorgeous day, made more spectacular by the absolute stunning scenery around us. My heart lifted and soared. Our skis on, we set off down the trail, and then the day fell to pieces, the roar of snowmobilers. "Don't worry," Steve assures me, "they are soon forced onto their own trail, separate from ours." (Thank heavens!) We pushed on up the mountain, following the snow packed trail.

Glistening, white snow; bright, sparkling sunshine; a bluer than blue sky; tall, jagged peaks reaching out to shake God's hands, perfection. What a wonderful way to spend Christmas with my loved ones. The silence is enormous, no one was on the usually busy trail, maybe later, but for now it was all ours.

As we breathe heavier the higher we go, the more we slow down, taking in all the panoramic views. At lunch, we stop beside the canyon rim on a large flat boulder. Each of us carrying part of our Christmas meal in our backpacks. Down below in the canyon, that ever seething Snake River roars by as rapids, up further is the Lower Mesa Falls, majestic even from our mighty perch.

I felt so at peace, and so close to the Owner, Creator of all this, elegant, spiritual cosmos. No other words can best describe the feelings I had on that day. At the beginning of our lunch we lifted our juice packs and toasted baby Jesus' birthday. Our voices are soft, we watch an eagle gliding on the currents, we feel the wind shift and a cold chill permeates through our layers of clothes. It's time to head home. (This would be our last Christmas in Idaho.)

Here's to all our special holiday memories; where life is good.

Melinda D. Clarke, CPA

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The Face of Drought

by Karen Ott



It was September 1935 and the year, thus far, had seen its share of momentous events: Amelia Earhart flew solo from Hawaii to California, Ma Barker and gang were gunned down by the FBI, Adolf Hitler revealed a plan for German rearmament, and the hotly debated Social Security Act was signed into law.

Far removed from the suspense and intrigues of the wider world, residents of the Nebraska panhandle went about their lives as usual ... children concentrated on read'n, write'n, and arithmetic, farmers prepared for harvest, and Mrs. V. King received her monthly copy of Woman's World, a magazine dedicated to 'short stories, home furnishing, needlework, fashions and cookery.'

The newsstand price was ten cents, but Mrs. King had opted for the fifty cent a year subscription; 77 years later I purchased it, along with several other old magazines, for a dollar. For less than the price of a Minute-Mart soda I bought an intimate glimpse of life in the 30's.

On page nine screen star Carole Lombard, in praise of Lux Soap, gushes, "Yes, I use cosmetics, but thanks to Lux Toilet Soap, I'm not afraid of getting Cosmetic Skin!", while Ex-Lax, on the following page, advertises itself as a 'dainty, mild, gentle, thorough and very pleasant way to combat that dreaded enemy of loveliness and health... constipation'.

Amidst ads for Kellogg's corn flakes, Sana-Flush, DMC crochet thread, Eagle brand condensed milk, and Morton's salt,(its familiar blue box the only spot of color to be found inside the entire 32 black and white pages) Hollywood actress, Irene Dunne, extols Color Harmony makeup... which promises to, "Make a woman look twice as good as she does now." New color schemes for home decorating.... deep green walls for the living room and rose-beige and dark mahogany for the bedroom are, according to decorators, young and enthusiastic... a point the writer drives home with "You'll agree with me about this someday."

If she knew how to sew, a woman could purchase dress patterns by mail order. If she didn't she could contact the Larkin Company and request a catalog for lovely Edna-May dresses.... which could be purchased on time by joining the Larkin Cozy-Home Club with its fifty cent payments to "fit the housekeeping budget." Money, or the lack of it, was a obviously on everyone's mind as ad after ad lures the cash-strapped reader with get-rich-quick schemes: Earn Cash The Easy Way; Extra Money easily earned; Work for Uncle Sam, start \$105.00 to 175.00 a month and even Wonderful Opportunity-manage potato chip store, 'We furnish everything.'

But there's more to this magazine than nostalgia.

An article, entitled Fact and Comment, written by Theodore Von ZieKursch had this to say about the Federal Government and the state of the Union:

"Statistics developed by economists show the amazing fact that 22 cents of every dollar earned by the people of this country is taken away from them in the form of taxes. But that is not the end of the bad news. It is estimated that within two years the figure will be closer to 30 cents, and if the government continues appropriating money by the billions after its present appropriations run out, the figure will rise even further. The thing that so many of us overlooked, and that was pointed out with a warning in these columns nearly two years ago, was that the people would have to pay for all the government's expenditures."

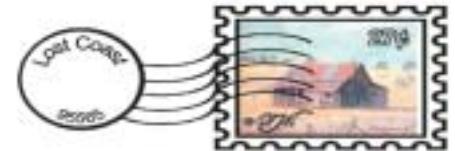
"Two courses were open. The government and the states would be compelled to spend large sums in relief channels. That was obvious. But there were two ways in which it could be done. The first was to hand out the money promiscuously, literally give it away, on the theory that the way to bring about better conditions was to loosen up money. The other way was the saner method of spending money for work, improvements, roads, buildings, dams, bridges, actual public works that were needed and that would have to be carried out later anyhow at the expense of the taxpayer."

"This latter was an investment method of spending.... However, the

Continued on page 14 >>>>>

Mayhem and Miracles

By Vicki O'Neal



It was late...almost midnight. The madness at the Malls and Department Stores was well under way.

People scrambled for bargains, grabbing everything in sight and shoving it into shopping carts.

Beyond the frenzy of shoppers was a panel of electronics. Radios and TV's were blaring away. News. Sports. Christmas commercials. A kaleidoscope of sights and sounds from around the world. It was madness.

The News isn't very cheery this Holiday season. But CNN and FOX News were making the most of it....They proclaimed loudly to the heedless frenzy of shoppers:

"Here in California, there is no room for the baby Jesus!" declared CNN. "No room at the Inn...and certainly not at the Park! A nativity scene in Santa Monica has been outlawed in a City Park where it's been displayed for over 50 years."

A camera zoomed in on the baby Jesus in Santa Monica. He looked sad and fretful....like he was crying.

The rest of the News was no better. There was talk of Fiscal Cliffs, and economic turmoil. FOX News seemed the gloomiest, tonight. It was airing a documentary called: "Countdown to Doomsday: December 21, 2012."

On other TV screens was News of equal misery. Trouble in the Holy Land. Escalating tensions in the Middle East. According to CNN, the news from Israel was grim tonight.

"The Middle East is a tinderbox," said a CNN anchorman. "In Israel, it is 5 o'clock in the morning and a Ceasefire has just been brokered between Israel and Hamas. The world holds its breath as we await the outcome. Will there be Peace?...or World War III?"

I sighed as I headed down the crowded aisles. Is there anything good about Christmas this year? Any sign of love and peace and "goodwill-toward-men"? I saw nothing that looked remotely peaceful or kind. Even the nearby Santa Claus looked depressed. An unjolly fat man who needed liposuction. And

what is that glint in Santa's eye? Is it a twinkle?...or is it a tear?

Santa's plastic Rudolph seemed miserable, as well. The reindeer's nose was raw and redder than usual, like he had caught a bad cold—

My dreary thoughts came to an abrupt end. A sudden noise had broken through my consciousness. A roar....or was it a bel-low? It was so loud and so close.

"AAARRHHHHAAAh!"

I paused. So did everyone else. The crowds froze. What the heck? Has the mayhem from the Middle East invaded America? Has World War III begun...? Is Doomsday already here?

The sound was monstrous. In all my life, I'd never heard such a racket inside of a store.

I turned a corner and peered through the crowd. At Check-out #3 was a young man—a handicapped individual. He was roaring at the top of his lungs, rocking back and forth. Furious. Hostile.

His caregiver stood beside him. She was a short, stout, motherly woman not over 5 feet tall. She was as calm as the young man was hostile. Unruffled. Unflappable. She soothed him good-naturedly. "Be nice," she said, patting his hand.

The young man went on roaring and rocking back and forth.

We all looked away and shuffled our feet. Everyone was uncomfortable—but not the woman. She was undaunted. Calm. Loving. Persevering. "There, there!" she said. It's going to be all right." She reached out and gave him a hug....this roaring, angry young man who seemed ready to fight the whole world.

The crowd waited, nonplussed...Frozen in the midst of their frenzy.

The roaring had been going on for over a minute now. An

Continued on next page >>>>>>

Your Country Neighbor

<<<< **Mayhem and Miracles**, Continued from page 12

unbearable sound that could be heard throughout the store. But then suddenly, it stopped. Miraculously, the roaring was over.

The woman's love and patience had calmed the distraught young man. He stood at the check-out counter quietly now. Subdued. Comforted. The caregiver smiled at all of us. "Merry Christmas, everyone...!" she said.

We smiled back. "Merry Christmas!"

And so it was.... Here in the midst of Holiday Madness, a woman's love and patience had won a battle over hostility. She had prevailed over a situation that could have easily spiraled out of control. A woman full of compassion and dignity. Love and kindness and Christmas cheer...!

It was contagious.

The night suddenly seemed less hectic. The air less stifling. We all took a deep breath and relaxed.

I paid for my purchases and headed for the front door. The radios and TV's were still blaring away, but they seemed a bit more hopeful.

"...It's a critical moment for the Middle East," said CNN. "The skies are now quiet in both Gaza and Israel. No more flying rockets or missiles. A fragile ceasefire has just taken

hold...each side agreeing to lay down their weapons. The truce seems to be holding."

I left the crowds behind and headed into the cold night air. The stars above were bright and sparkling. Flawless diamonds against black velvet.

I looked up into the sky and breathed a prayer of thanks.

And I said a prayer for Peace.....



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<<<< **The Face of Drought** *Continued from page 11*

first method was chosen, the idea of giving money away. It was all right with the people who did not look too closely at results and effects. Now the tax burden is beginning to come home to all of us and is going to grow to such an extent that unless some of the theorists who have taken to running things in our various governmental units are thrown out by the people the result may well be disastrous in a few more years."

"The only solution seems to be for us to make them quit meddling and interfering with business, the farmer, and industry, so that those three great forces can again pick up the burden to some extent, or the country may very well be headed toward bankruptcy."

Sadly enough, if you substituted the phrase 'A Fiscal Cliff' for the word bankruptcy, this article could have been written last week. Despite our technological and scientific advances one fact remains unchanged and unchallenged after all these years.... if a government spends more money than it collects in taxes it's going to go broke. There wasn't a free lunch in 1935, and you won't find one in 2012.

I'm not familiar enough with economic theory to know whether battling modern-day bankruptcy with the depression-era solutions is good or bad...all I know is that the horseman of higher taxes is riding hell-bent-for-leather towards our farm and our tire shop. And that scares me to death.

In closing.....

The first time I thumbed through the 1935 September issue of Woman's World a yellowed slip of paper fell to my lap. Penciled on the back of a torn invoice dated January 10, 1929 was this: "Received from Victor King \$10.00 loan." It was signed John Tyarks.

I can only assume Mr. Tyarks was unable to pay back the \$10.00 (plus interest) which places him in the same company as our Federal Government.

As Always

Karen

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Christmas Coyotes

Under a cold sky on Christmas Eve,
the last crumpled oak leaves fall
on freckles of starlight.

To the east, a chorus of coyotes rises.
With yip and howls, the dogs crescendo
their cacophonous song.
We listen to them sing no more than
a few yards behind the house
in the dark and bristling trees.

I imagine their excitement,
hunting with glowing eyes and restless paws
like my jubilant young boys on Christmas
morning. The boys stalk silently under the
tree, their small hands and shining eyes
prowling between mounds of bright
packages.

Across the road, the coyotes bring down a
yearling deer. Under the pink wisps of
sunrise, steam rises from the fawn
as the song dogs feast. As the sun winks up,
they abandon their kill.

Their hunt over, the boys wander into the
den. Sipping hot coffee as sun spills in,
I sit on the floor surrounded by the
eviscerated carcass
of Christmas.



Winter Day

Pearl icing drizzle
perched at the edge
dangling over nothing
air scoured with snow
buffing sharp edges
of sunlight
into grey
angora
sweaters



Small Wonder

Little masked bandit
frisky feathered pixie,
guardian of hoarfrost and
winter's crystal gardens.

Rambunctious flying friend
freeze frame fast in
formal wear
bounding brightly
from branch to branch.

I tilt my head, listening intently for
that vivacious scold
among January's
muted trees.

Your exploding chortle ignites
the frozen land,
alerting me to fill
my seed trays.

As the winter wind empties
of effervescent spring song
the chickadee's bubbling call
lessens the loneliness
kindled by the silence
of the wrens.



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