

# Your *Country* Neighbor

July 2013  
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Be safe this July 4th. Celebrate that America is 237 years old and it still works.



The Meadowlark sings, “When are you going to plant the wheat?”

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## Cover Photo

There will be fireworks on July 4th all over the Nation. I will be photographing the show at Brownville, either from the River Inn, or the river bank.

The Western Meadowlark is a favorite of mine. I remember as a young boy walking through the pasture and hearing its song, which I think is unique among the birds I know. In Willa Cather's "Song of the Lark" (or was it "O Pioneers!"), she writes that its song says, "When are you going to plant the wheat?"

Twice in the last ten years of photographing southeast Nebraska, I have come across a more colorful, albeit less melodious 'lark'. The second time was just a few weeks ago. I am assuming it is the Eastern Meadowlark, but what do you think? Check out this more rare 'lark' on the back cover.

## *Voices from the Valleys of the Nemaha*

Publisher and Photographer, Stephen Hassler

### Writers This Month

Devon Adams  
Carol Carpenter  
Mary Ann Holland  
Merri Johnson  
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Marilyn Woerth's 'Moon' garden, so called because the flowers 'glow' in moonlight.

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See Page 14 for Examples

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Humboldt, Johnson,  
Nebraska City, Peru,  
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## Poetry by Devon Adams

### GREEN BARN

The old wooden barn is set upon a foundation of limestone blocks that has calmly held the structure straight for a hundred years, at least. The paint has turned to faded red dust, and tin on the roof is rusty, but the inside is dry and echoes to the tune of a thousand hail stones pounding dents into the metal when storms wreak their havoc. Next to the box with straight lines is a natural barn, a huge linden with a double trunk and leaves so thick that sun drops can't fall on the soft dirt underneath. This is where the horses stand on the hot days, in the shade, sleeping, as the breeze cools in the deep of the shade, and the sun keeps her pouty distance.

### STORY IN THE SONG

As the radio plays the old songs that were new when we were young, our minds flash back to yesterday. Like a haunted diary, written on the back of your brain, the music brings back moments in perfect detail, and we can feel the memories. They are the stories of our lives, and we wrote them one song at a time, while we listened to the beat of the latest hits.

### TALL GRASS

The cycle of years has spun around again, and this year's brome is tall enough to touch the sky. The roots that live in the dark of the dirt were awakened by the pounding of the rain that came over and over in the chilly spring. After nightmares of drouth all of last year, the pale and battered hairs of life must have drunk too much of the rain wine, because they pushed up the stalks and forgot to stop.

### WATER FALLS

Where is the edge in the sky where the water falls over and crashes to earth in blinding torrents? How can such force come from a cloud? There must be a river flowing above us that plunges over a cliff and dumps walls of rain on all that lies below.

### FREE FEAST

The crowd has been waiting and dreaming of the sweet, soft berries full of purple juice. Every day they have checked the branches, looking for the final stages before the green is gone and the color is dark. And then the early sun of a summer morning touches her hot poker to the mulberry tree, and it seems that all at once the fruit is ripe and ready to eat. Soon the ground is covered with winey stains, as fragile berries fall when little beaks and fingers jiggle branches. The tree is full of twitters as birds get the word that the time has come. They are greedy and try to eat all of the produce before the fuzzy, four footed, masked raiders make their moves in the dusky dawns and darks of the days and nights.



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## THE REAL WORLD

So what is reality?  
Is what you see the same as what I see?  
I doubt it. Even members of the same family perceive each other in different ways. The same events may be remembered as lots of fun, or boring, or scary, or so insignificant as to leave no memory at all, depending on who is talking about it. One friend may appreciate the beauty of nature, while another sees only numbers and measurements, while another can hear the timing and pitches of sounds and music that are just noise to a brain lacking that talent. Have you ever been with someone who has no clue about what just happened socially? The significance of gestures and tone of voice may reveal information that is invisible to one who is blind to it. What happened, at that place, and at that time, may be more pure perception than truth.

## COTTON CLOUDS

On the lazy winds were pieces of clouds, floating randomly, taking their time choosing a place to land, watching the friends they'd never see again, as they drifted far away from each other. Their mother tree was waving at them as they left, her waxy leaves rattling loud goodbyes. Summer days will find them sticking almost everywhere, these tiny bits of cotton from the cottonwood, that have a ritual wind dance every spring, just as the carp are spawning in the clear waters of the northern streams that feed the hungry Missouri River.

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## New Health Care Marketplace Information Coming Soon! How Will Medicare be Affected?

Mary Ann Holland

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Educator and Trained SHIP Professional

Very soon, the media will focus a lot of attention on the Health Care Marketplace and insurance products that individuals, families and small businesses will be able to purchase through provisions of the Affordable Care Act. States will have insurance exchange websites where consumers can shop for and enroll in affordable health insurance options. Enrollment opportunities are set to begin October 1 of this year. Coverage will begin January of 2014.

October also marks the beginning of the annual Open Enrollment period for Medicare Part D and for Medicare Advantage/Medicare Health plans. Those enrollment dates are October 15 to December 7.

The enrollment process for Medicare is not affected by the introduction of the Health Care Marketplace. The insurance products sold through the Health Care Marketplace are targeted toward individuals, families, and small businesses as they plan insurance coverage for their employees. Medicare insurance coverage is intended for adults age 65 or older, or adults under the age of 65 with certain disabilities.

In other words, this new type of insurance coverage is designed to meet the need for age groups younger than 65. For Medicare beneficiaries who are

currently insured by Medicare, have purchased Medicare Supplement policies, or have selected Medicare Health Plans, nothing changes.

The forthcoming flurry of media attention, which will undoubtedly come in a variety of formats such as mail advertisements, radio and television ads, and social media marketing, is likely to cause a great deal of confusion and concern for Medicare beneficiaries. If you are currently receiving Medicare benefits, by reading this news article, you will know you can simply ignore marketing information related to this new insurance coverage option. Don't feel one bit guilty when you deposit these marketing pieces in the nearest 'round file.'

This article was written by Mary Ann Holland, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Educator and Trained SHIP Professional located at the Cass County Extension office. She can be reached at 402-267-2205 or by e-mail at: [mholland1@unl.edu](mailto:mholland1@unl.edu).

Resources used in preparation of this article include: *Health Insurance Marketplace*, HealthCare.gov website; 6/17/2013.

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## Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

I am writing this column on summer solstice, the day on which the sun reaches the northernmost point in its unending north-south pacing of the sky. To be precise, the great burning orb came to a halt at 12:04 a.m. CDT, according to [www.almanac.com](http://www.almanac.com). Tomorrow, the sun reverses course, plodding southward. It almost makes me feel sorry for the sun up there, watching the goings-on down here over and over, with its eye roving only about 30 degrees above and below the equator.

Perhaps it wouldn't matter where the sun "looked." As we read in Ecclesiastes 1:9, "there is nothing new under the sun" anyway. This philosophical observation, attributed by many to Israel's ancient king, Solomon, can express both discontent and comfort. How one feels about it varies with circumstance. On humdrum days, we may crave some excitement; when the excitement takes a form we hadn't imagined, we long for the return to routines with nothing new to upset our equilibrium.

You may have heard about a fire that destroyed a home in Peru, Nebraska, earlier this week. While I have little personal knowledge of the family's routine prior to the fire, it's a safe bet that there's nothing routine about their situation right now. Thankfully, there was no loss of life, but I can only imagine how the near total loss of their material possessions has shaken up their world.

A house fire isn't even a tiny flicker compared to the sun's continuously flaming mass. From our divinely designed safe distance, that continuous inferno is generally considered a good thing. Though we may suffer some discomfort on a hot summer day, we would perish without the sun.

But a house fire, that's another matter. It's never a good thing. Even so, we do well to contemplate the possibility that it could happen to us. What possession do we value most in our homes that we would grab as we fled? Is our insurance coverage adequate? Is there a fire hazard we should address? Do we have working smoke alarms? Have we made a donation to our local volunteer fire department or thanked a fireman lately? Most importantly, are our families and our spiritual houses in order?

Misfortunes happen every day to someone, somewhere. Sometimes there's an explanation, but many times they just seem to be random. And even if there is an answer to the "how" of the misfortune, there may never be a satisfactory answer to the "why?"

When life's circumstances don't make sense to us, we can find encouragement in friends, faith, and the knowledge that despite our present difficulties, the sun will come up tomorrow. All is not lost after all.

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# Photography and Poetry by Carol Carpenter

## Early Summer

Like plush carpet,  
grass thickens  
along ditches,  
fields and fencerows.

Warming on the stone porch,  
A garter snake glistens  
in the bright morning sun.

Emerald leaves drip over  
heavy branches  
speckled with bird nests.

The wind pauses  
catching a cool green breath  
before the dry throat  
of summer.



## Rainbows

I know all too well  
it's only the spectrum  
of visible light  
refracted, reflected,  
angled and speeding  
through the drops  
of liquid cool,  
flickering mists with  
prisms of color,  
ROY G BIV and  
all that I learned  
back in kindergarten.

Yet, when I stop for a moment  
at the edge of a storm,  
to gaze at  
sun kissed sky  
painted with rainbows,  
I have to believe  
that the world  
is filled  
with magic.



## Watching the Sunset

I love to watch the sunset start  
cashmere grey and golden light  
orange feathers floating in liquid blue.  
The sun dips lower  
at the horizon's edge,  
the cloud feet guild,  
pink wispy tendrils swirl  
across a buttered popcorn sky  
Streaks of crimson and melon  
ribbon above the final wink  
of the day and the sun plunges  
out of view.

Magenta and lavender lean  
against slate blue shoulders.  
I love to watch the changes,  
the passage of moment to moment  
texture and color move to  
the earth's rhythm in a  
humbling, rich ballet.  
At that glorious moment,  
streaks of yellow gold glow  
like fields of wheat bending  
in the breeze.  
Amber and pink finally  
give way to soft gray.  
As the first star  
appears in the indigo,  
I gather the palette  
in my arms  
and each evening  
remember how lucky I am  
to see the sunset end.

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### Buyers-You've Signed The Purchase Agreement-What's next?

by Leslie Justus

After months of looking at listings online and viewing houses with your real estate agent, you've finally found the home of your dreams! Prior to writing the offer, you probably went through the pre-qualification process. Now it is time to get the ball rolling. Take your signed purchase agreement to your mortgage professional to get started with the loan process.

#### -Things To Keep In Mind-

- **Sellers-Buyers-** the closing date on the purchase agreement is a target date only. Please do not make final arrangements based upon this date until closer to the actual date, and loan approval.
- **Inspections-** make sure you are aware of what needs to be ordered and the deadline dates.
- **Switching** jobs or buying anything expensive could slow down the loan process. Wait until after closing.
- **Make** arrangements to have the utilities transferred in to your name.
- **Contact** your insurance person to arrange for coverage for your new home.
- **Schedule** a final walk-through. This is your last chance to view the house before closing.
- **Bring** your drivers license to closing. They will need a copy.
- **Always** keep in touch with your real estate agent and your loan officer through- out the process. Feel free to ask questions.

**Be prepared to sign more paper than you could ever imagine signing. When all is said and done, you will be handed the keys to your new home.**

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### Wild Turkeys Near Brownville in Early June



# Of Mice, Men, and the Mighty MO

By Vicki O'Neal



My old friend, the Cap'n, asked me to accompany him to the MO the other day.

"A fishing trip...?" I said. "Of course! I'd love it! I haven't been to the Missouri River in a long time!" It was the most exciting offer I'd had in months!

To tell you the truth, folks, since my recent divorce, I'm pretty fed up with Men—but I *do* love cruising the MO...! I couldn't turn down the Captain's offer, even if it was from a *Man*.

"That's what I like about you," the Cap'n said when we arrived at the river with the Jon boat. "You're not scared. Everyone else is terrified of the River. They say: 'It's got deadly whirlpools! It's-haunted!-for-Gosh-Sake!'" He unhooked the boat from the trailer. "You're the only one who will go with me!"

I laughed and tossed the picnic basket into the boat. "Let's go, Cap'n...!"

We set out in good spirits. It would be a glorious day. We had great plans. Even though the skies looked rather gray and overcast, nothing could daunt us...not Today!

We headed up the Mighty MO with a roar, the wind in our faces.

The Cap'n was in an especially good mood. He's not always amiable, you know. Sometimes he's downright crabby. He gripes about things, especially the stowaway mice on board the boat...those terrible critters who chew up his nets, life-jackets, and Slickers. The Cap'n can be a real bear sometimes.

But not today. Today, the Cap'n was chipper and tolerant. He wasn't grouching about anything. And I was glad.

Soon, we were setting out fishing lines along the river. We hooked and baited. We munched cold pizza from the picnic basket and drank warm Kool-aid. We struggled with slimy fish and mouse-eaten nets. It was pure pleasure.

But then it happened. The best laid plans of Mice and Men...They began to go awry.

It was the fault of the Russians, as usual. Those wild Russians. They always upset the Cap'n.

Russian carp began leaping from the murky depths of the MO. They shot from the dark waters and hammered the hull of the boat, slamming it like missiles from the deep. A big Russian torpedoed the Captain's face, striking a heavy blow to his right cheek. It glanced off him and landed at my feet, flopping wildly.

"Score! We've got a Big One!" I cried. "Can I keep him?" I asked the Cap'n.

He sighed, but he didn't sling the offending Russian into the water like he wanted to. He didn't even cuss. Instead, he put the carp into the fish bucket...Just for me.

We soon headed out on the open waters, again, with the outboard churning away. It was then that I noticed the heavily overcast sky, and my pleasure evaporated in an instant.

The best laid plans of Mice and Men were about to go awry....Big time!

*Continued on page 13 >>>>>>*

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# The Face of Drought

by Karen Ott



The land is in bloom, the sweetly scented wild roses counterbalanced by flowering skunk onions.....a small, smelly, relative of the yucca. The fibrous bulbs, called kha-a-mot-ot-ke-wat by the Cheyenne, were used by plains Indians as bug repellent, food, and an odorous homeopathic treatment for all sorts of ailments, but most modern folks, even the greenest of the Greens, shun the plant. I've never known of anyone who would, or could, willingly eat skunk onions raw... except my father.

At least once a spring my Dad would saunter into the house smelling to high-heaven, prompting my mother who always, in other circumstances, welcomed his "I'm home" kiss, to back away, and exclaim, "You're going to stink for a week.", her eyes watering from the stench. "Whatever possessed you to eat those things?"

Dad would give us kids a wink, contritely shrug his shoulders, and give her an impish grin.....one which said "You know you love me anyway."

And she did.

I was fortunate to be born into a happy home, a sanctuary where no one talked of spending quality time with the kids because even the most ordinary of days was sterling. I know most probably consider 'family as refuge' quaint and old fashioned, but in this technological, social-media-driven era it deserves some serious consideration.

The worst trouble I could get into after my parents tucked me in at night was reading "To Kill a Mockingbird" by flashlight.....today's kids hide under their covers and invite the world, good and bad, into their bedroom.

American families might lock their doors at night, but they've given their keys away to perfect strangers.

But enough of that.

We spent a few hours yesterday (Father's Day) afternoon 'down at the river', three generations of family wading

from the cool water of Horse Creek into the bath-water-warm Platte. Both waterways are so severely shrunken by drought that the catfish were nearly walking, but that didn't stop the kids, (ages 10 to 5) from having the time of their life.

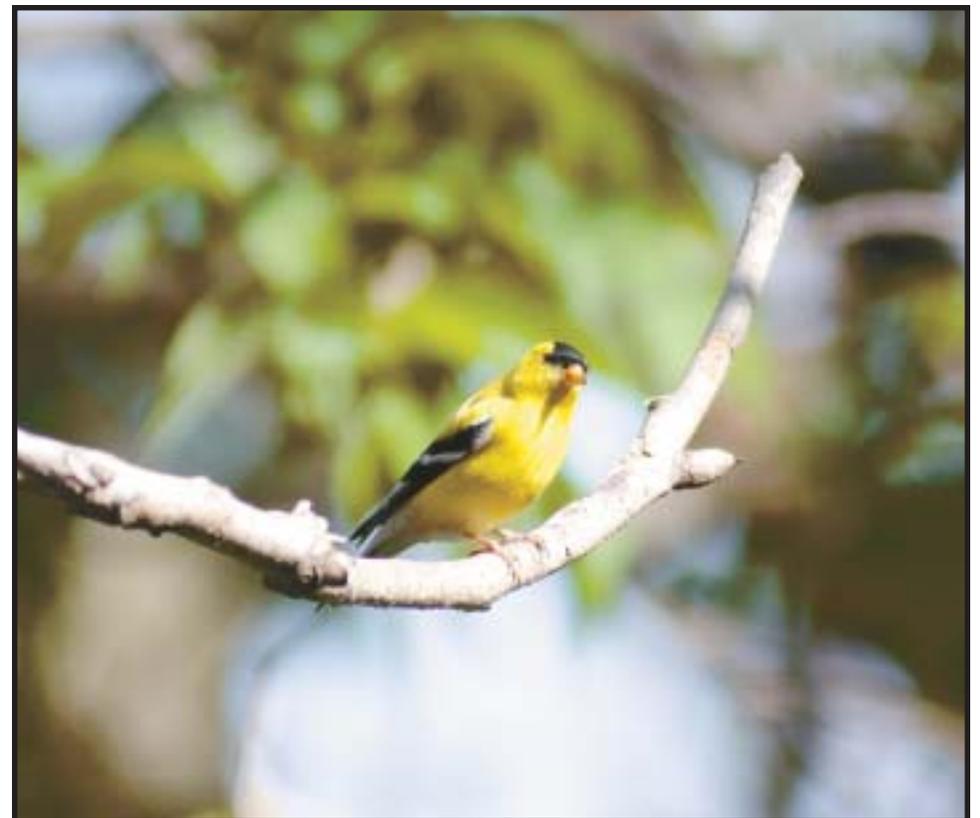
It was a great day.

This week, along with a thousand other chores, we begin flood irrigation.....

Pray for us.

As Always,

Karen



Goldfinch

# Alzheimer's Affects Us All



Life  
is  
Good!

## Well-Being Has A Lot To Do With How You Feel About Your Health

A higher sense of overall well-being leads to fewer hospital stays and emergency room visits, and the use of less medication, according to a Wall Street Journal article. So what? Well, if you're managing a chronic health condition, such as diabetes, asthma, heart disease, or arthritis, how you think about your life and your ability to live well, despite and with your condition, is increasingly important to doctors and other healthcare providers. People are motivated to manage their medical condition properly when they have meaningful goals, such as wanting to spend time with family or perform better at work. Just being told to watch blood sugar levels or cholesterol numbers seems to be generally insufficient enticement to manage health or illness well. When patients do a better job of managing their health, the whole system saves resources and money.

Thinking about how patients view their lives in relation to their health may sound obvious, but it is not the way professional medical personnel generally think or behave. They're trained to focus on objective measures, like blood sugar, not the subjective, conversational, "how happy are you with your life?" kind of questions. They see patients once or twice a year in a check up, or sometimes more frequently for a chronic condition. Doctor visits tend to be short, very focused on the ailment or test to be conducted, and generally are not repeated unless the problem resurfaces or worsens. Follow-up visits may not be with the same person, so continuity may be lost.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is developing a more holistic approach to disease prevention and health promotion, based on measures of physical and mental well-being. Here's what the CDC found:

- Supportive relationships are one of the strongest predictors of well-being.
- Well-being is connected to having positive emotions and moods, functioning well, and not being depressed or anxious.
- Personality plays a role in well-being; extroversion, optimism and self-esteem are helpful.
- Age may be a factor: younger and older adults generally have more well-being than middle-aged adults.
- If you live in a society with an effective government with low levels of corruption, which generally meets citizens' basic needs for food and health, you're likely to have higher well-being.

A key factor in this new approach is counseling as part of a regular follow-up program. One study participant said the counseling gave her the tools she needed to better manage her condition in an environment where she felt listened to and understood for the first time. The bottom line on the counseling: people benefited from 1) knowing others understand their struggle and 2) having a personal, meaningful reason to manage their disease.

## Weight Loss is Not Always a Good Thing...

Be concerned if you have unintentional weight loss. Take yourself to the doctor for a thorough physical, including blood work, and a complete review of symptoms and medical history. Dr. Joshua Miller, the medical director at Cleveland Clinic's Strongsville Family Health Center, says, "Gastrointestinal symptoms can signal malabsorption issues such as celiac disease, where your body is not absorbing nutrients properly. It can also signal depression, or often in the case of elderly patients, early signs of dementia. They may think they had a sandwich for lunch, when in fact, they forgot to eat. It can be one of the first signs."

### Webinar from Cleveland Clinic Stroke Center's Dr. Shazam Hussain

As part of our Stroke Awareness campaign, we hosted the fifth free public webinar in our Home Care Assistance Healthy Longevity Webinar Series.

The webinar was held on **Wednesday, June 26th**, presented by Dr. Shazam Hussain, leading stroke neurologist, esteemed Director of the Cleveland Clinic Stroke Center and assistant professor of neurology at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner School of Medicine of Case Western Reserve University. **The webinar covered healthy habits that can reduce your risk of stroke and shed light on the treatment regimens and therapy programs that have made the Cleveland Clinic Cerebrovascular Center a leader in post-stroke care. Dr. Hussain also conducted a Q&A at the end of the webinar.**

Home Care Assistance's goal is to encourage people of all ages to adopt healthier lifestyles that decrease their risk for stroke and other debilitating conditions. **For those who may have recently suffered a stroke, please visit our website at [www.homecareassistance.com](http://www.homecareassistance.com) and download a free copy of our Patient Guide for Post-Stroke Care as a tool to help you plan for your own recovery or the recovery of a loved one.**

By increasing stroke awareness we hope to empower individuals of all ages to take action to lower their risk of this life-altering condition.

<<<<<<< *Continued from page 10*

“Look!” I said, pointing. The overcast skies were growing darker. “We’ve got to head back to the dock! We can’t be in the middle of the River with lightning flashing everywhere. We’ll die!”

The Cap’n squinted at the laden sky. Lightning flickered across the heavens like a writhing serpent. “I guess you’re right,” he said.

He’d no sooner turned the boat homeward, than it started to rain.

I scrambled to find a mouse-eaten Slicker hidden in the hull. Slipping and sliding across the wet deck, I struggled to put on the ratty raincoat—without falling overboard—then I hunkered down behind the Captain’s windscreen as the skies unloaded on us.

“Hurry!...Hurry!” I cried. “Can’t you hurry? We’re going to get struck by lightning!”

The rain pummeled us without mercy, but the Cap’n made quick work of the MO. In minutes, we rounded the final bend and saw the dock up ahead.

With the sky ripping itself to shreds about us, we hauled the Jon boat onto the trailer. Thunder boomed. Lightning exploded in our faces. “We’re gonna die!” I shouted. I jumped off the boat and ran for the truck.

I expected the Captain to follow me—but he didn’t. I could see him standing at the front of the boat... Standing motionless in the down-pour, staring at the hull with lightning flashing all around him.

What the heck?

I waited a few minutes until the rain slackened a bit, and then I got out to see what he was staring at so intently. I couldn’t believe it. Mice on the deck!...A Mama mouse and her small offspring.

“Well,” I said. “You can finally get revenge! They’re the ones who have been chewing up your nets and Slickers!”

We stood watching the Mama mouse scamper about frantically, trying to shepherd her babies toward safety. She had big dark eyes and a very long tail....A kangaroo mouse. She was pitiful. A rain-drenched Mama doing her best to save her little ones.

I sighed. “Just get it over with!” I said to the Cap’n. “You know what to do.”

I went back to the truck to wait, staring out at the drizzling rain. Our splendid plans for the day were wrecked. The old adage doesn’t lie: “The best laid plans of Mice and Men....!”

The Captain joined me a few minutes later and we pulled away from the dock with the boat in tow.

I took off the ratty Slicker and stuffed it behind the seat. “So, how did it go?” I said, “...with the mice, I mean.”

He was silent for awhile. At last he spoke. “Well...I hate those mice and I’ve always planned to kill them!” the Cap’n said.

Then he grinned sheepishly—the mean, hard-hearted Cap’n with all of his chewed-up nets and Slickers.

“I planned to kill ‘em....” he said, “but I let them go instead.”

I could only shake my head.

How unsettling it is...Trying to comprehend what goes on in a Man’s mind! It simply cannot be done, Ladies—as I found out that day on the Mighty MO.

Heed my advice! Don’t spend your life fretting, trying to figure out Menfolk and their “best-laid plans.”

Just stick with the mice, Gals....They’re much less scary...!

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## A GHOST STORY

Shirley Neddenriep

I'm in a relationship. With a house. My house. We are inseparable. We have known each other for 67 years, at first quite casually, then slowly we became acquainted and finally we belonged. Do you want to stay? Not without water. There is not water, not inside, in pipes.

So in 1958 without even a bill of sale it got water.

Is a house an "it," or a "she?" Trenches all around, six feet deep. One day son #3 hung by his elbows pumping his legs. He told people he was 'threb,' holding up three fingers. Tell of its ghosts, its lives, its deaths. In 1872 when she first came to be with two rooms down and two up, life on the Nebraska prairie thrashed its inhabitants.

"What?!" said the first woman. "A dirt floor?!" She harnessed the team and brought limestone from a quarry. Her walls, its cellar walls, stand straight, still. A dozen Austrian Pines grew to deflect the constant wind. Watered from the 70-foot deep well; its seventy-foot tower harnessed that wind to pump water for people and beasts alike.

Austrian pines mature at 80 feet and top out flat to show they are done growing. Son #4 found the top an easy climb. There is a photo showing his hooded self waving from the top branch. Its his home place, too.

Only three of the pines remain. Others fell in a severe wind storm that took the head from the windmill tower. A Red Cedar took the place of one of the fallen pines. Planted by the head of household at that time, the cedar is an icon.

The original family grew and in 1908 added rooms. And a front porch with wooden floor and filigree trim at the top. But it all came down in the 1960s to be replaced with wrought iron and cement.

Two women have breathed their last in this house. The first an early victim of whatever malady took the lives of her two littlest sons while the house too, struggled in infancy.

She who hauled limestone and designed the open stairs. She died in a north bedroom and is buried at Hickory Grove, bitter, the story goes..

The master took another wife to care for his children. She too died here in this house. She returned from sunny California to die in the house she had managed earlier in her life. They tell that she lived for six weeks on a Tablespoon of whiskey a day.

Were theirs the ghosts who moaned on days when no wind blew? Not a breath of air outdoors, but step inside. A definite moaning from above the front door, inside the front hall, inside the closets above! Why did they moan? Did they mourn their house? Or their lost children? I listened with empathy.

An open stair case graced the front hall. Walnut spindles stood in place and culminated at a solid walnut newel post. An era before someone had covered the spindles, the newel post with white paint. It aged to ivory. Another layer, seeking whiteness, yearning for purity?

My turn came. Inhibitions released. Layers gone to reveal walnut spindles and newel post. Toxic fumes of paint remover rose. Paint scrapings fell. With help from a crazed wood worker, the beautiful walnut spindles were set on a turning lathe where their treasured tapers were whittled smooth! They had to do. The beauty gone, but secured for a sturdy, beautiful stair, its steps covered in red wool.

With change to the stairs, two closets above them were removed. "Wouldn't it be grand?" visualizing the hall opened up. A chandelier hung from a long chain where the closets had been. The moaning of ghosts had ceased! Perhaps the sorrowful souls had found peace.

## Where Life Is Good

Marilyn Woerth

Summer is here, nice and hot and sultry. My tan is back and I feel healthy but sore. Yes, sore trying to keep up with all the yard work that I am about a month behind because of a weird spring and an eight day vacation. And now it is just too hot to work in the afternoons and I don't know if I will ever get caught up. **I AM STRESSED!** How are you doing?

I'm not sure why I am stressed; the vegetable garden is coming along fine. The rest will get done, when it gets done, as always. I keep telling myself to chill.

The fourth of July is coming up, and hubby and I are on the Freedom Celebration committee and looking forward to a busy full day starting on the evening of the third when we decorate the town. We love the Fourth of July in Brownville. The celebration really takes you back to what the fourth is all about. (Check out ad in the June issue.) Did you figure out I live near Brownville?

What I need to do is to update you on a few things I have talked about in past articles. One is the status of my front yard that we reseeded last fall. I have found out the weed that showed up last fall and this spring is called creeping speedwell or *Veronica filiformis*. The web site also said it was hard to eradicate. I have seen this weed all over this spring. It must have been a weed that profited from drought conditions. So I am not blaming the grass seed, since this weed as I mentioned is all over the place. So now I will let you know what kind of grass seed we used, since I really love our yard and it looks so healthy. Remember I told you I researched drought resistant grass seeds, since that seems to be the trend. (April, 2013.)

Are you ready? It's from Wild Flower Farm's and it's called Eco-Lawn, a blend of fescues. The front of the bag says; The Ultimate Low Maintenance Lawn Seed! It goes on to tell us that it requires no fertilizers, forms a dense turf, drought tolerant, resists insects and fungus, thrives in full sun, part shade and even deep shade, reduces mowing time or don't mow at all! So far this all seems to be correct, don't know about the shade as the area we planted is full sun, but will try the shade this fall.

Lastly, I had my moon garden soil checked because some of the white flowering plants had started to change color to a pink or purple. The results from the lab: Your soil has a high ph 7.8, neutral is 7.0. Also, your sulfur is low. The high ph may be influencing your flower color. So I added a fertilizer high in nitrogen and still need to add something called Agri-Sul. Thank you to our extension office.

Well, you all take care; enjoy the fourth, your gardens, hobbies, and county fairs. And don't stress, summers like 2012 only come once in awhile, where life is good.



Photo by Jennifer Mumm



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