

Your *Country* Neighbor

Free

July, 2017

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A Magazine for Small Towns and Rural America



What is it? See Wildflowers, page 6.



My Favorite Landmark in Nemaha County, Nebraska in its Summer Gown of Green Vines.



The Wildwood House; Nebraska City's Other Mansion, June, 2017

Your Country Neighbor

Voices and Views From the
 Valleys of the Nemaha

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

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Out & About

Stephen Hassler

June was a beautiful summertime month; a bit warm, but with needed rain as well. Peru State College celebrated its 150th anniversary. Peru's annual *Old Man River Days* was the first weekend of the month, sponsors included Decker's Food Center, where they still 'carry out' groceries to your car, and Mainstreet Bank, formerly the Bank of Peru. The Lyceum is now open in Brownville for lunch and some evenings for dinner.

One of the best things in June was looking forward to July's events; Brownville's Freedom Run and Parade on the 4th, the Nemaha County Fair on the 13th through the 16th, and Peru's "City Wide Garage Sale" on Saturday, the 22nd. Have a wonderful July!

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June Writers

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Guitar Poems

Steve Adams



I'm sure he's forgotten
By most here in town
His place is all grown up
Junk scattered around

He walked with a limp
Didn't have no car
He'd still walk to town.
Said, it ain't that far

I'd give him a ride
If I seen him carrying his gear
It was mostly just
Bread and beer

As we drove up his old rutted drive
I wondered sometimes
How he survived
An old run down trailer
In a one horse town
With only his feet
To get him around

Think of the winters
And the hot summer days
When I think about it now
I'm simply amazed
How he made it through
All of those times
He was a hell of a man
And nobody
Even realized

Ole motorcycle Bill
He lived on the hill
He was fun to listen to
And I wish I could still

I'm sure he's forgotten
By most here in town
His place is all grown up
Junk scattered around

We'd sit in the yard
And drink warm beer
He was fun to listen too
And I wish I could still

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June/July Wildflowers; Nemaha County State Highways



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Poetry by Devon Adams

IN THE SOUP

The great expanse of prairie that drops from the cold heart of Canada into the space between the high western mountains and the eastern ridges that have become rounded with time, is the place where a primitive form of soup is manufactured. In winter, frozen fingers reach down and grasp damp breaths of moisture that sweep inland from the Gulf and the Pacific. Blinding blizzards and epic ice storms are formed from those elements. But in the summer, the mix is more volatile and explosive. Water laden air is sucked up from the Gulf by massive low pressure systems, and it collides with colder currents coming from the north. The jet stream blasts through these two major players and adds a twist and a roll to the boiling soup that results in a magnitude of storms that swell into huge mountains of thunderheads. Like furious stallions clashing in a war, the clouds erupt in cataclysmic explosions of thunder and lightning, torrential rainfall, winds like bulldozers and vicious funnels that spin out destruction. And all humans can do is feel the energy and watch the show.

CELEBRATE

Celebrations will echo across the country in explosions of light and fire and booms from fake bombs. Citizens will plan picnics and eat until their tummies are extended into gassy balloons. They will wave flags and march in parades, and declare this country to be the best place to be. But they won't be thinking about the subtle ways in which freedom can erode in bits and pieces until it isn't what it used to be. Freedom isn't free, and it is easier to lose it than to get it back again.

DRIVING IN THE DARK

In a sense, we are all driving blind, trusting that when we hit the headlight switch there will be beams ahead of us on the road, leading us through the night. We know only yesterday and now, so it is an act of faith to expect that tomorrow will come with all the heat of a new sun.

FISHING FOR SERENITY

It isn't the lake, or the high blue sky filled with soaring birds, or the gentle rocking of the boat, or the fishing line jerking at your pole, or even the wonderful pan of fried fish you ate last night, or the murmur of the easy waves, or even the silence of your phone, that makes you sigh with relief. It is simply that you are here for awhile, and not back there.

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SHADOW BREEZE

The velvet green of grass is dappled with dancing shadows, as a summer wind breathes currents of heat through the trees. Long light bathes the days in sunshine, as wild things teach their children how to survive the coming coldest season. The young ones, though, are distracted by all the magic moving things that surround them. It's hard to listen to Mom when a butterfly flutters past, or a wren is sputtering and fussing about the intrusion of four rambunctious baby raccoons playing under the bush where she has her nest. Time exists moment by moment, and each second captures all the wonder of the universe.

STEALING BASES

Out there in the blazing of the sun, in the dust and dirt and sweat, and gnats and skeeters, with arms and face becoming pink with burn, are the boys of summer, playing for their team and dreaming of the big leagues in a stadium with more than family bleachers. No doubt the fantasy is only that, but sometimes it can happen that a lad is tapped to try his talent on a big time stage. So, all the sneaks and slides for bases, skinned knees, sore arms, foul balls, strikes and runs and catches, and tears and cheers add up to golden memories forever.



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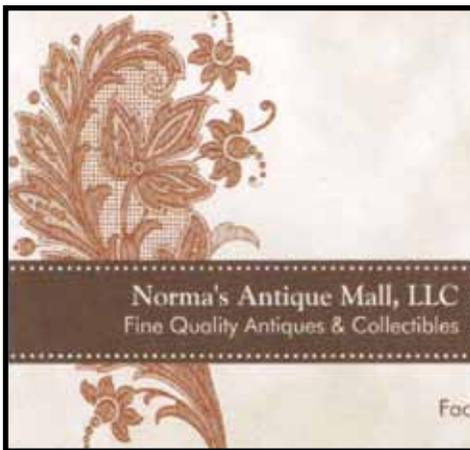


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Continued from page 4

Not sure what the answer is to this dilemma, may have to get the cages out and move them around but what does that accomplish? It just makes them someone else's problem. I have heard that people from Missouri bring them over to Nebraska and then Nebraska people bring them back to Missouri. See what I mean? They can't reach my hanging pots, so maybe I should just toss the planters except for the three feet high ones (I only have two of those), and go with the hanging baskets.

Something has to give. This is just too frustrating. At the moment I am trying to find the good in where life is good. So I will put my thinking cap on, get out my laptop and see what solutions I can come up with. After all, we all have to live on this same planet together. Because despite setbacks it still is the best darn place to live. It still is my place, "where life is good".



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Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

My family recently spent a wonderful week in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. The long-awaited trip to celebrate Hubby's retirement at the end of 2015 couldn't have been much better. Our kids, their spouses and our grandchildren were all together in one big cabin. The weather was fantastic except for one day of rain. The view of the Smoky Mountains from our deck – especially from the hot tub on our deck – was gorgeous. Our son-in-law had the honor of seeing two baby robins make their maiden flight from their nest under the deck roof.

From hiking to sight-seeing to Dollywood, there was something for everyone.

I had just one disappointment: I didn't get to eat at the Pancake Pantry. To quote from their brochure, "Since 1960 when the Pancake Pantry became Tennessee's first pancake house, visitors to Gatlinburg have made dining with us a tradition. What keeps them coming back? It's the real butter, the honest-to-goodness fresh whipped cream and everything made from scratch. And it's also the warm atmosphere of century-old brick, rich oak and rustic copper." It's the antithesis of that other Southern breakfast tradition: Huddle House. If you've ever eaten there (and I have) you know what I mean.

Being a fan of pancakes (I generally treat myself once a week), I was totally looking forward to dining at Pancake Pantry. Since no one else in my family shares my devotion to pancakes, Hubby and I decided we would wait until everyone else headed back home to visit the renowned restaurant.

Hubby cooked a big breakfast of hash browns, eggs, ham and bacon for everyone on Saturday morning. Then once they all took off around 11:00, the two of us took a final hike in the National Park, followed by a scenic drive. We returned to our cabin to change and then went downtown to enjoy an early supper at Pancake Pantry.

We paid \$10.00 to park and walked up to the door of the restaurant at 5:00 p.m. The door was locked. The operating hours sign revealed that closing time was 4:00 p.m. What?! I was to be denied my choice of one of the 24 varieties of pancakes?! No Old Fashioned Buttermilk Pancakes, or Austrian Apple-Walnut Pancakes covered with apple cider compote and topped with powdered sugar and real whipped cream? No Peach Delight, Blueberry, Whole Wheat or Apricot Lemon? And not only that, but Hubby missed out on sinking his teeth into one of their Gourmet Sandwiches: the Viennaburger, the Blue Ribbon Hamburger, and the Dutch Diplomat, to name a few.

My disappointment was deep. But, after all, we did have plenty of leftover food at the cabin to eat. It was necessary, of course, to get our money's worth for the parking fee, so we shuffled up and down a couple of blocks. Hubby discovered an ice cream shop and a beef jerky store he couldn't pass up.

When we returned to our cabin, I spied the Pancake Pantry brochure on my dresser top. There on the front, in bold font, were the words, "A GATLINBURG TRADITION FOR BREAKFAST AND LUNCH." Not dinner, or even supper, as we Midwestern-farmer types refer to the evening meal.

Ah, well, like I said, we ate leftovers that night. But breakfast on our return trip to Nebraska was pancakes and sausage for me at the 125-plus-year-old Original Springs Hotel and Spa in Okawville, Illinois. The room wasn't much and the spa was closed when we arrived, but the pancakes were mammoth and fluffy and the three sausages must have totaled at least eight ounces. I only regret that I couldn't possibly eat it all. We did have a cooler with us, but Hubby made me "walk away" from the untouched third sausage, though it pained me to waste it.

We're bound to make more trips through Tennessee on our way to visit our daughter and son-in-law in Georgia. Sooner or later I'll get to eat at the Pancake Pantry and experience true pancake nirvana.



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Of Garden Greens...and Birthday Blues

By Vicki O'Neal



The other day, my dear friend turned 55. And what a day it turned out to be! I'd bought 5 birthday cards to give to Holly on her 55th birthday—but in the end, I didn't give her even one. It was that kind of a day, folks!

I awakened in the early morning to the irksome throb of my cell phone. I squinted at the clock and groaned. "What do you want...?" I said into the phone.

"Today is my Birthday!" said the voice on my celly. "And I need help in my garden!"

"WHAT....?" I lurched upright in my bed. "Today is your birthday?" But of course! My friend had been telling me for weeks, but somehow I'd forgotten.

Holly has been my friend for a long time, now. The woman is strange...funny...absurd...upside-down and backwards. She's "Crazy Holly." Like me, she's a Country Girl living in the City. With blue eyes and long blonde curls, she's every inch a Lady—but she has the memory of an elephant....and most of the time she's just a tad bit nicer than a mad Badger.

She really won't beat you up, though. She just threatens.

Unfortunately for me, today was her Birthday—her most important Birthday! And I'd forgotten all about it!

I struggled out of bed, threw on my clothes and grabbed a handful of birthday cards. I snagged a Cake-mix and a can of Frosting on my way out the door.

When I arrived at her house, I found Holly in tears. In lacy pink pajamas, she was standing in the front yard looking utterly forlorn, her long golden mane blowing in the breeze.

A wheelbarrow of dirt had spilled its contents nearby, and Holly was clearly at the end of her rope.

"Everything is going wrong on my birthday," she sobbed. "Look at the chaos!"

Her ornate fencing was smashed. Her normally immaculate yard was a mess. A huge heap of manure-dirt was piled in her usually spotless driveway. (No one is allowed to park there, because the car might emit a drop of oil. There'd be all Heck to pay!)

Holly is just a bit OCD. And today, she was beside herself.

I took the birthday supplies inside the house, then helped her clean up the yard and driveway. I shoveled dirt and straightened fencing, while trying to sort out the details of what had happened.

It seems that Holly's kindly neighbor—a one-armed man who lived nearby—offered to bring her a truckload of soil for her large Garden Box....A tidy Garden Box that knows how to behave itself!

Well. Everything started going haywire when Holly's one-armed neighbor couldn't back his truck into the confined area. He ended up running over the decorative fencing and smashing everything.

Little piles of dirt and manure were dribbled everywhere. In mere moments, he had managed to foul up the Perfection in Holly's life—and it had happened on her birthday! Her 55th birthday.

It was a mid-life Crisis in the making.

"Is this the way it's going to be?" Holly moaned. "My life as a 'Senior'...? If it's this

bad already, what will the rest of it be like?"

"Oh, it gets worse," I assured her cheerily, scooping up piles of dirt. "Just ask me. I'm 55-and-a-half...And I know! But at least you'll get your Senior Discount!"

We sorted and sifted and shoveled and straightened until, at last, we got the chaos under control.

Holly slung back her long golden mane and brushed the dirt off of her lacy pink pajamas. She sighed. "Time for birthday cake!" she said.

"But I didn't make your cake yet!"

"Well...I did," said the resourceful Ms. Holly. "Made it while you weren't looking! Only took a minute to pop it in the oven."

"You made your own birthday cake?" I said.

Holly just smiled.

And so it was...with dirt still beneath our fingernails, we sat down to a hastily baked Birthday cake. We slurped cold milk and relaxed in the sunshine while the tidy Garden Box did exactly what it was supposed to do.

The earthworms ruminated with the fresh soil. The veggie seeds soaked up moisture....And the Sun did what it was supposed to do, too. It shined and shined and shined.

It had to....

Today was Holly's most important Birthday!

Alzheimer's Affects Us All



What if it's not Alzheimer's, but ADHD?

By Lee Nyberg

I'll bet you've heard the joking phrase, "Everyone has a little ADHD".

The diagnosis of school children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder has risen since 2007 by 42%, with one in ten having ADHD, according to Psychology Today. In a 2015 NY Times article, Dr. Martin Wetzel of UNMC said increasing numbers of older adults are being diagnosed with ADHD. The connection between school children and older adults is the hereditary nature of ADHD. When a child is diagnosed, a parent often has their own ADHD confirmed for the first time, which then leads to looking at a grandparent's behaviors. Often, adults have had the condition their entire lives, without knowing problems with planning and reasoning, impulse control, poor listening skills, and high distractibility are a medical condition and not merely personal failings. Dr. Wetzel explained a diagnosis of ADHD requires a doctor's clinical evaluation; it cannot be determined with a blood test or from medical imaging.

Researchers have only recently begun studying older adults and ADHD, with most studies taking place in the last ten years or so. Current thought says ADHD lasts into older adulthood; in contrast with the former belief that a person matured out of ADHD. Research shows older adults respond to medication for this condition in much the same way children do; medication helps increase the attention span, improving ability to focus and complete tasks.

A key similarity between ADHD and memory issues is the ability to pay attention and function normally. Think of memory as a filing cabinet. When memory works correctly, you pay attention, you notice something you want to file (location of keys), you file it (keys are on top of refrigerator), and then retrieve the file when you need it (find keys). An impaired memory might fail at any of those points, such as not being able to retrieve the file (find keys) even though you noticed where they were earlier. A person with ADHD might pay too little attention to details, but not have memory loss due to damage to the brain, as with dementia.

Even though dementia and ADHD have different causes, some of the issues a person has with mild cognitive impairment and early dementias appear to resemble the issues experienced with ADHD, such as inattention to details, missing appointments, difficulty paying attention to conversations, losing things, impulsive behavior and difficulty staying on top of tasks which require focus. These 5 items from the Alzheimer's Association's "Know the 10 Signs" (alz.org), relate to attention difficulties:

- Challenges in planning or problem solving
- Poor judgement
- Difficulty completing familiar tasks (e.g. bill paying)
- Trouble reading or driving
- Misplacing things and unable to retrace steps

Dr. Wetzel noted researchers began excluding people with ADHD from Alzheimer's studies around 2012. Due to now defunct thinking about aging out of ADHD, it is possible some older adults have been misdiagnosed with dementia.

Take advantage of Brain Awareness Month. Get checked out if you have concerns about yourself, or support your loved one at a doctor's visit. Alzheimer's disease is not inevitable. Changes in cognitive ability may be caused by several treatable conditions.

Lee Nyberg serves older adults and their families through education on aging issues and her company, Home Care Assistance. Learn more at www.HomeCareAssistanceOmaha.com



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