

Nemaha County, Nebraska, Rodeo

Calf Roping Event

Voices from your Valley

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Voices from the Valley of the Nemaha

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

Writers this month

Devon Adams
Merri Johnson
Vicki O'Neal
Karen Ott
Josh Whisler
Marilyn Woerth

Thank You

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Your Country Neighbor

P.O. Box 126
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Poetry by Devon Adams

NEGOTIATING NAVIGATION

The big bugs that fly high have pilots,
and names painted on their skins.
They make lots of noise as they cruise
at different altitudes, writing white lines
across the blue, following sky maps.
I wonder what the little bugs would think,
if someone ordered them to file flight plans,
and communicate with air controllers.

I'm guessing that gnats and wasps and
bumblebees would argue that they don't bumble,
bees and butterflies would collaborate on
corporate replies that they don't collide.
And if they voted to form a union in order
to negotiate with management, they would
propose that their system is more sophisticated
than humans can devise or duplicate.

FINDING THE MUSIC

The task was to find the source
of some great music emanating
from the dense lilac bushes.
It had to be coming from throats
with formal training in opera,
or at the very least from genes
that carried tunes across generations
of singers who could project their
resumes to discriminating audiences.

I looked for a large body wearing
an elaborate costume worthy of all
the flash and color of a rock star.
But what I found was a nondescript
individual wearing a dark brown coat
of feathers. He was perching deep inside
the top of the tall bushes, as if to keep
his identity hidden, like an undercover
spy wearing a camouflage of sound.

DAY DARK

The roots of night dug deep
into the earth and would not let go,
as the day tried to come into light.
Gray, wet clouds scudded over
the folds of spring, weeping tears
onto the beleaguered plains.

The thundering voice of the rain god
bellowed deep echoes that rumbled
and broke against the hills, shaking
the ground like an earthquake, as spikes
of lightning forked their tines into sodden
soil with the force of atom smashers.

Where Life is Good

by Marilyn Woerth

After 9/11 my husband decided that the yard needed a flag pole. Now in typical Midwestern fashion he decided to make this pole. No dramatics this time. He did a pretty good job of fashioning a decent flag pole tall enough to carry not only the American flag but a Nebraska Husker flag as well (hey, he is male). He placed it on the north end of the pond next to our gravel road. In true Woerth fashion he made a small planting area around it, a male and female holly bush, and some orange Asclepias, (butterfly weed). He covered the area with white rock.

Almost every morning you will find him out there proudly displaying the flags. He is after all a veteran of eight years of submarine service. Our wedding even included patriotic music (we were married a year before his draft number was 32). Patriotism runs deep in his blood. His father was sixteen when he enlisted, then wounded in the Pacific theater. Our oldest son enlisted in the Air Force (ten years) and from his time in Kuwait (during the attack on the Cole) brought home a flag that had been flown over Iraqi in an Air Force jet. The flag came with a certificate with our names on it. My husband flies this flag on special occasions.

Did you know that in all the areas we have traveled in the United States and parts of Europe (except for the Washington D.C. area), do you find a nation's flag flown more than in the Midwest. I have heard that the Midwest contributes a large chunk of the enlisted men and women who serve in our military services. Looking at our families we believe it. The latest from my own family was two of my brother's daughters. They were 19 and 23 when they both served the same year in Iraqi. My brother was heartbroken (a father is suppose to protect his daughters). Imagine what he went through when the youngest was in a fierce firefight. Just recently she tried to erase that memory by getting married on the same day (I hope, no I pray it works).

To me there is no stronger way to say thank you to all the veterans than to strongly display our American flag. Don't you just love seeing one huge stars and stripes flapping across the prairie? You cannot achieve a more vibrant memory than a view like that. Happy birthday America from your patriotic Midwest, out here where our hearts swell with patriotism and life is very good.

P.S. For those wondering about the Crepe Myrtle in the March issue it did come back from its roots and is doing just fine in my front yard. Thanks for wondering.

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Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

Some people assert that there is no such thing as *coincidence*, by which they mean that nothing happens by chance; but, rather, that everything happens for a reason. It follows, then, that they must believe in a supernatural power governing events, putting them at odds with my American Heritage Dictionary, which defines coincidence as “a sequence of events that *although accidental seems to have been planned or arranged.*”

I haven't taken a firm stand on whether coincidence is purely chance or not, but I can give several personal examples from just the past few weeks whose occurrence seems to be more than pure chance judging by their frequency, if nothing else.

The first example is one of those events that elicit a “thank you, God,” even from people who insist they don't believe in a higher power. It happened when I was mowing my lawn. The wind was gusty, but I hadn't taken any particular note of swaying tree branches overhead. I passed under a large walnut tree and continued to the opposite end of our yard. When I turned around and headed back toward the walnut tree, I was stunned to see a good-sized limb lying on the ground where I had just been. I am absolutely certain that I would have been seriously injured if that limb had landed on me. It was so heavy, that it was all I could do to drag it across the yard to our brush pile. So, did the fact that I finished mowing that exact spot two minutes before that limb came down happen by chance? Or was there a guardian angel looking out for me? But if I had a guardian angel, why not that little Omaha boy who was killed by a falling limb just a few days prior?

My second example is less dramatic, but still impressive. I made plans to meet my son and his family at the Henry Doorly Zoo one day in early June. They had been at the zoo since it opened that morning and I arrived around 2:30. It was a lovely afternoon and hundreds of other people had decided to visit that day, too. Row after row in the parking lot was full, except for one spot in the third row right across from the main entrance. What luck! I thought. But that isn't even the best part. When I pulled into the space, I realized I was nose to nose with my son's car! What are the odds of that happening by pure chance?

The third incident combines elements of the first two: timing and my car. I made plans to drive two different individuals to medical appointments on the same day, so my husband drove the truck to work, leaving me the car that day. At 8:30 that morning, one of my riders called to let me know that she had cancelled her morning appointment. Within a couple of hours, the other rider called to inform me that her afternoon appointment had been postponed. Well, that freed up my day quite a bit, so I thought I'd run a couple of errands. Except that when I turned the key in the ignition, nothing happened. That's generally not a good thing. But, it would have been a much bigger hassle if my two riders hadn't coincidentally cancelled their scheduled rides for that same day. It was as if they had some premonition that it wasn't a good day to rely on me for a ride.

This last example may not be a coincidence, strictly speaking, but it's close enough to merit mention. My husband recently went on his annual fishing trip with some buddies from work. The forecast called for rain, so he wisely packed one of the several sets of rain gear he has accumulated by reason of *not* packing it for previous trips and having to purchase another set while away. I suggested that since he had so many sets, he might want to pack two, in case one of the other guys needed one. He looked at me as if I had suggested that he pack extra underwear for them. “Guys don't do that sort of thing,” he said. (Some sort of code of “non-nanny-ing” among real men, I guess.) So he opted to pack just one of the light-weight “garbage bag” suits and leave the heavy vinyl gear at home.

Well, predictably, it rained. And – *coincidentally* – it blew. In fact, it blew hard enough to rip his plastic rain pants, leaving him with one-legged rain gear. If he had just taken my suggestion to pack two sets, he would have had a spare. I have no illusions that the coincidence of my recommendation to pack a spare, and my husband's actual need for a spare, will make any difference the next time he packs for a fishing trip, or any other trip for that matter. But it's still gratifying to be able to say, “If only you had listened to me.”

So, dear readers, where do you come down on the question of coincidence? Is everything just chance, or do certain things happen as part of a great cosmic scheme, pre-determined and meant to be? And how do you tell the difference? Whatever the explanation, here's hoping the coincidences in your life always have a happy ending.



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Whisler's Hunting & Fishing Report



by Josh Whisler
(Photos provided by Author)

Fishing:

The River is going through a historical change. It has been out of its banks for most of June due to heavy rains and has nearly surpassed the 100 year flood level of 1993. The river level at Brownville crested at 41.92 feet compared to the 1993 flood of 44.30 feet. For those who witnessed the 1993 flood, I don't have to tell you what kind of damage and clean-up is going to be seen when the river finally decides to go back down. The 1993 flood was even more devastating due to the levy breaks near Watson, MO., which ended up closing US Highway 136 and parts of I-29 in Missouri and in Iowa.

What's it do for the fish/fishing? There will be some serious changes over the rest of the summer – some good and some bad. The bad part will be – When are we ever going to be able to make it to the river again? It's going to take awhile to dry out and get roads and boat ramps cleaned up and reconditioned, not to mention the mosquitoes that we will have to put up with for the rest of the summer due to stagnant pools of water left behind from the flood. The good part is there is already spear fishing going on in the shallows and this could continue for most of the summer and not a bad thing either to make use of trapped fish once the river is back in it's banks. Another good thing is that fish breed in shallow waters and flood waters are a perfect place to do that rather than the swift currents of the river. We witnessed this after the last flood. The fish just seem to spring back at a miraculous rate after a flood year. We will have to wait and see on that, but for now, if you are not into spear fishing it's off to a pond or lake to fish.

Hunting:

Fall Deer Season Permits are available over the counter or online starting June 14 until the close of deer season. There are a ton of new changes this year and I will cover just a few in each of my next few articles to get you ready for the up coming season. I will call the changes as I see them and prioritize them:

Change #1 – The price went up on permits:

Deer (firearm, archery, muzzle loader, & season choice)	— \$30.00
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Landowners	_____ \$15.50
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October Antlerless (10 days)	_____ \$11.00

Change #2 – TELECHECK

Telecheck was used some last year and looks like it took hold. Now you are required to telecheck your bagged big game on the internet - on all seasons except the regular firearms season. During the regular firearms season check stations will be manned – all other check-ins are to be performed by the internet. Need to check out the 2010 Big Game Guide. They are available at Walmart and on-line at the Game & Parks web page (outdoornebraska.ne.gov).

Summer River Fishing is really spoiled for now, but there are plenty of ponds and lakes that offer fishing opportunities. Don't forget to plan your fall deer hunt – permits available now. 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."




Terry Hager from Nebraska City with a big tom taken near Peru during the Nebraska Spring Turkey Season.




A picture of a river access road covered on the river side of the levy near Peru.

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The Face of Drought

by Karen Ott



Early in June, thunderstorms, tornados, monsoon rains, and hail from pea to baseball size have wrecked havoc. The mud-brown Platte is higher than ever, and area residents are discouraged by the daily damage inflicted by powerful storms which arrive morning, noon and sometimes in the middle of the night....one after another.

Everything is a muddy mess.....some fields are underwater, some need replanting, and still others haven't been planted the first time.

Cattle have been electrocuted by lightening, pummeled to death by hail and even drowned in creeks and rivers which were ankle deep just two years ago.

So far we've been lucky; we've had an excess of wind and rain, but little hail. Of course that could all change today...depending on Mother Nature's mood,

This spring she certainly hasn't been the mild-mannered, flower-crowned, walking-barefoot-through-dewy-grass-woman portrayed by sentimentalists.

She's been more like this:

Coming soon to a night sky near you: The Greatest Show on Earth: Midnight Lightning.

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If I could catch old Mom Nature I'd lock her in the closet and give her nothing but bread and water until she promised to behave.

Karen

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We're in serious trouble, folks. There are dark clouds building on our horizon.

We've become desensitized to the news of collapsing banks and businesses and foreclosures. We aren't tuned in to the traumatic events going on in America and around the world. We've heard people cry "Wolf!...wolf!" for so long, we aren't aware when it's time to go into a full-blown alert.

Like Brian Williams says on NBC...."The world has no money, and the Emperor has no clothes!"

We've seen hundreds of banks going belly-up in the last few years—81 of them in this year, alone. People are losing their cars and houses and businesses. Their pensions and investments...Their jobs—even their minds.

Countries around the world are heading into bankruptcy at an alarming rate...Nations like Greece, Hungary and perhaps even Spain and Portugal. We've got trouble with our US dollar and our national debt.

"The Emperor has no clothes..." Indeed!

To make matter worse, there are plumes of oil spewing into the Gulf. The earth is hemorrhaging at a tremendous rate, and no one knows how to stop it. Coastal wetlands and marshes are turning into tar pits, as sea creatures wallow in misery—dying a slow death.

The seafood and coastal-tourism industries are going under. Gulf fishing vessels sit stranded. Restaurants, resorts and hotel rooms sit empty while the white beaches turn black with globs of oil. People are becoming sick from the fumes flowing in from the Gulf coast—yet there seems to be a blackout on the news. There are rumors

of mass evacuations. No one knows what to believe.

Economically, the oil spill is like a visit from Lady Katrina all over again...but a hundred times worse.

The catastrophe taking place in the Gulf is just a foretaste of what is coming....That's what experts are saying. The oil could be caught up in the currents, taking it around Florida and up the east coast. From there it could spread into open waters, and perhaps around the entire globe—killing off sea life and making the oceans toxic, as the Bible has predicted.

Experts say, even if the gushing oil could be stopped today, the effects of this spill will last for decades—especially when hurricane season arrives and the oil begins slamming against America's shores.

The US is in trouble. The world is in trouble—in more ways than one.

Are we surprised? No. Not if we've been reading from the Good Book. The Bible predicted all of this trauma many centuries ago. We're seeing the handwriting on the wall, my Country Neighbor—and it is grim.

What are we going to do about it? Well...We're going to prepare...that's what we're going to do. We're going to hunker down and get ready for the trouble that's just ahead. We can't afford to wait until a full-blown panic sets in.

We've got to think like the elders who have gone on before us...Like our staunch forefathers—the pioneers in the old days. We've got to get ready for the storm that's looming on the horizon. When our ancestors saw storm clouds rising in the distance, they didn't go about their business as usual.

They circled the wagons. They gathered

the cattle into the barns...the chickens into the hen-house. They closed up the shutters and fastened down every loose object. They prepared on every front. We've got to do the same if we're going to survive.

The elders of our nation have seen the Great Depression and all that it entailed. They remember well the days of hunger and sacrifice. They know what we all need to do.

How about going to one of these patriarchs...these old timers who live near you. The Frieda Burstens of this world. The Joe Smiths. The farmers...the gardeners...the aging housewives. You'll find them at their breakfast tables with their hands folded in prayer... with a Bible sitting nearby.

Our elders will tell us what is just ahead. They'll tell us the lessons from the olden days that can help us through the storms ahead.

Folks...We can't be ashamed to say it. We need help and we need it now.....

So help us God...!

'Til next time, my Country Neighbors.

Love to you all...

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