

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



The Dogwoods blossomed prolifically this Spring. This one beside the Carson House Museum in Brownville.



Bluejays. He feeds her to save her energy for nest-building.

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## Voices from the Valleys of the Nemaha

Publisher and Photographer, Stephen Hassler

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Syracuse, and  
Tecumseh.

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## Front & Back Cover Photos

The Carson House Museum in Brownville is almost always photogenic, but when the Dogwood is blooming, it is the best... if caught in the right light. Not great here, but not bad either. Sometimes the Dogwood and the Lilacs bloom at the same time. That's when it's best. Maybe next year.

Back photos are, from left to right, American Robin, Baltimore Oriole, Cedar Waxwing, and the Rosebreasted Grosbeak. The Grosbeak and the Waxwing were just passing through. The Robin and Oriole nest around here.



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# Poetry by Devon Adams

## PASS THE WORD

There must be secret symphonies composed of notes that only certain specialized species can understand. Like a silent radio broadcast, the information about nectar and new blooms and choice seeds and sugar water and grape jelly and sunflower seed hearts and swarms of juicy bugs and fat worms and fresh, clean water and bread crumbs and orange slices and cat and dog chows on a porch is cast to the winds and before you can blink, there are critters coming from all directions to partake in the bounty. And they will keep coming back, because they are wily in ways that keep them alive, and if they are lucky, make them fat and happy.

## HEAVY AIR

So much for the crisp, dry air that is warm from the sun, but not uncomfortable. After damp, dark days of a winter stretched too far, like thin soup without any flavor or body, the calendar is stingy about extending the definition of spring. A brief flirtation with ideal days is over too soon, and the air starts to sag from the weight of water that has traveled north from the blue and humid waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Steamy sweat starts to stream from warm-blooded bodies as sunshine heats the vapor until we feel like we are trapped inside a kettle with a tight lid.

## NIGHT SOUNDS

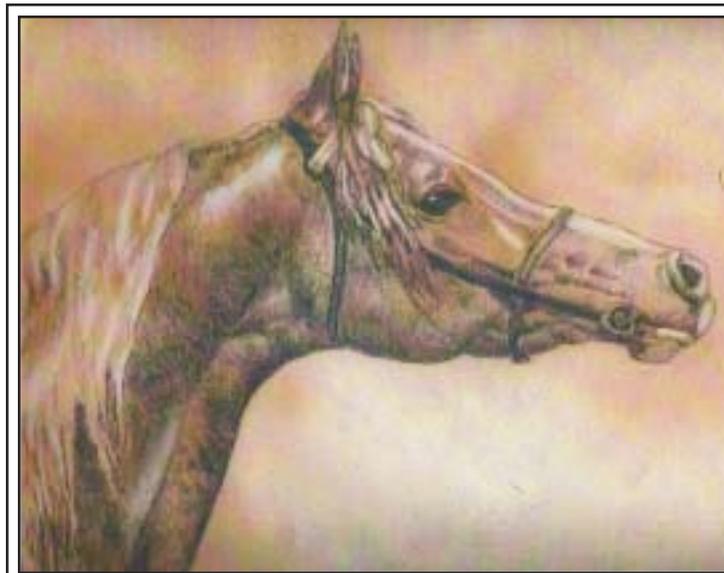
Hidden in the dark of the night are the sounds of the wind mixed with voices that live in the trees and the meadows. Owls boom and bulls bellow as echoes repeat and dislocate their sources. A fox throws a throaty bark through the brush of a fence line and then moves like silent silk to a new location. The banshee cackle of a family of raccoons rattles the air and dogs erupt into explosions of challenge and fear. A pack of coyotes sings songs from the chorus of a nightmare, and a demented shriek rises from the site of a beer party lost in whisky. Soon the sky will lighten and morning birds will fill the day with hope and erase the imagined terrors of the night.

## WIND POWER

Sturdy legs dig deep into the fertile soil and hold on tight when weather tries to blow them into rubble. It has been years since the blades were turning to pump cool liquid from the old well on the forty acres at the bottom of the sloping field. Rural water went down the road with a handy pipe that became the new way to water the cattle, and the windmill became a trellis for the honeysuckle, bittersweet and some thorny twists of a prolific vine that seems not to have any assets. Birds and bugs love it here. They can see the scenery for miles. Winter frost makes a pretty picture of the structure, and old farmers pause to think about the old times.

## DRIVING LESSONS

Old cars left in ditches are like memories left in attics. If you touch them, they live again. Open the box of old photos and the past becomes the present. Look under the hood of an old '52 Ford and you see a motor that took care of a family. The powder of blue left on the Chevy truck was bright and shiny when the young boy learned to drive on the dusty dirt roads. Now the boy and the truck are a little less mobile, and the wild critters have learned to live in the shells of yesterday, making nests in the stuffing and digging safe dens under the heavy metal frames.



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# Medicare Drug Coverage, Parts A, B, & D

Mary Ann Holland

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Educator and Trained SHIP Professional

Medicare provides coverage for medically-necessary drugs in most situations. Original Medicare, which consists of Medicare Part A (hospitalization), Part B (medical), and Part D (prescription drug), pays for medications needed by Medicare beneficiaries.

Depending upon the drug in question and the method of administration, however, not all medications are paid by the same area of Medicare. The following examples may help to clarify for the insured how specific drugs are covered.

Drugs administered to a person while they are hospitalized (in-patient) or in a skilled nursing facility, are covered by Medicare Part A. Likewise, drugs given to someone who has elected hospice care, in any setting, designed for symptom control or pain relief in treatment of a terminal illness, are Part A-covered medications. The key term is **administered**. In other words, the individual is being given medications by healthcare staff in a Medicare-approved facility or by a Medicare-approved provider, such as a hospice organization.

Medicare Part B pays for medications given to an individual in the doctor's office, or in some cases, in one's home. Part B-paid drugs are injectable, such as IV medications, vaccines, or drugs administered by durable medical equipment, like a nebulizer, CPAP, or infusion pump. Drugs used in the treatment of cancer, anti-emetic drugs used with chemotherapy, drugs used by people with chronic renal failure, drugs used for tube feeding for permanent digestive tract dysfunction are Part B-covered medications.

Both Medicare Part A and B have deductibles and co-insurance. Medicare pays 80% of the cost of covered healthcare services. Most Medicare beneficiaries complete their Medicare coverage with a Medicare Supplement insurance policy purchased from a private insurance company. Depending upon the plan option selected, the beneficiary may have no other out-of-pocket costs beyond the monthly insurance premium. Ten different plan options are available, Option F has the most comprehensive coverage.

Medicare Part D, the prescription drug benefit, is the part of Medicare that pays for drugs purchased at the pharmacy, or delivered by mail through the drug plan's supplier. Part D drugs are self-administered. Prescription drug plans offered by Medicare-approved private insurance companies are available in every state. Medicare beneficiaries generally purchase a stand-alone drug plan to offset the cost of prescription drugs. The insurance plan typically

pays for 75% of the cost of the medications and the beneficiary pays the other 25%.

Penalties may apply if you don't buy a drug plan when you first become eligible. Part D prescription drug plans have monthly insurance premiums, co-pays or co-insurance, and may have an annual deductible depending upon the plan purchased. Drug plans should be reviewed each year during Annual Open Enrollment [Oct. 15 to Dec. 7] to make sure the Medicare beneficiary's current plan will be their best option for the next year. Once you have enrolled in a drug plan, your enrollment continues year after year providing the drug plan continues to offer coverage in your state. However, there is no guarantee the same plan will cover your medications year after year. Always check to make sure the plan you select covers medications you take.

Are there drugs Medicare doesn't pay for? "Yes." Medicare will not pay for illegal

*Continued on page 8 >>>>>*



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Dracunculus Vulgaris  
Submitted by Marilyn Woerth



Dogwood Blossoming beside the  
Carson House Museum

## Where Life Is Good

Marilyn Woerth

There is a garden book that I always keep close at hand. In preparation for writing this article I went a bit crazy when I could not find it. Guess what, I had moved it while getting ready for Easter. The name of the book is The Flower Expert by Dr. D.G. Hessayon. I love this book for *identification* purposes, it works for me. It is not chocked-full of a gazillion different plants as some books are but covers more of the popular or soon to be popular flowering plants (no shrubs or weeds). The front cover of the book touts it to be “The World’s Best-Selling Book On Flowers” and it may well be just that.

There is one plant in the book that I have planted down in our woodland area. I purchased the plants from a fall catalog featuring bulbs, ordered them, planted them in September and the next June was pleasantly surprised with the results. Now this plant is not your regular run of the mill, North American plant. No siree, its origins lean more towards Crete and Turkey where whole stands of them can be found.

Let me introduce to you to Dracunculus via my lovely flower book. (Quoted from the book The Flower Expert.) “Dracunculus, Dragon Arum. This is an easy plant to grow and it is eye-catching, but you will almost certainly never have seen one. It is curious rather than beautiful — the large leaves spread out like a fan and the large flowers have the spathe and spadix arrangement of the arum family. The odor is attractive to moths but not to people. It is not completely hardy, so cover the crown with mulch over winter.”

We grow our dracunculus, in the woodland with dappled shade and have not smelled any odor at all. It has become a popular plant in our circle of gardening friends. Many have trekked down to the woodlands the second or so week in June cameras in hand including this magazine’s publisher, Stephen Hassler. It is a photographic challenge mainly because of the lighting but also how the flower extends out to the side. Needless to say I have taken many pictures of this flower, most not so great. But through the years I have managed to capture the flower at its peak a few times quite well.

Spring thundershowers have just pushed through and I am becoming more and more excited about the forthcoming gardening season. Perhaps we won’t be doomed to repeat last year’s dreadful drought. I have a smile on my face just thinking of my unusual flower in the woodland, soaking up the rain, pacing itself to burst forth and surprise us with its exotic look, once again at just the appropriate time.

What could be more exciting in the heartland, where life is good, than an energetic ole thunderstorm and the enticement of what the current and the following growing seasons have yet to unfurl?

## THE STORM - Shirley Neddenriep

On Sunday afternoon, May 19, the Storm Radio let out its ear-splitting shriek. Again. It had sounded twice during the night. The announcer warned of a severe thunderstorm headed my way. I was busy trying to make a General Journal Entry into the computer and returned to my work.

The first I knew of an actual storm was the sound of hail pelting the south window. The garage door stood open facing north. I went to close it and there stood a young man with muddy shoes and wet clothing. I knew. His car, he said, had slid off the road. I knew. In years past a driver would get his vehicle stuck, then walk back to the highway and then to our farm, expecting my husband to pull him out. I knew what he expected.

We stood in the garage. He explained that he had noticed our graveled road to the south and assumed the other crossroad to the north was also graveled. He turned and before he realized the unsurfaced road, had driven 50 feet into the muck. His attempt to back out failed. He left his buddy in the pickup to go for help (me). He had a cell phone. I found the number of the nearest towing service for him. On Sunday. No answer.

Now this is what astounded me about his continuing story of woe. He and his buddy were 'Storm Chasing!' His balloon of elation at having caught the storm - deflated when he could see there was no tractor to pull him out. He concluded, "I will just walk to another farmer's house." How unassuming, that we farmers are here, just waiting for a hapless driver's plea for help.

Mentally I calculated how far he would need to walk to find a farmer willing and able to dodge lightning and rain, tote equipment, own a tractor large enough and not attached to a planter, crop sprayer, or mulch-tiller for the duration of Planting Season, attach a chain if the stuckee's vehicle had a hitch, clog the tractor wheels with mud, do it all, for the inept driver would know nothing of the mechanics of getting un-stuck. I surmised he would need several miles of walking. With night coming on and the storm firing up again, his situation did not look promising.

After their 'successful storm chase,' the pair were on the way home in a county northwest of here. By making the turn he intended to find a 'short-cut.' Ah-Ha! No map reading skills either. Maybe I am too hard on this fine, but naive young man. But it reminds me of a line from the movie, *Thelma and Louise*. Without meaning to, the women had committed a crime and were contemplating calling the police. "Why?!" exclaimed Thelma, "If we wait long enough the police will come to us!" Same with the 'Storm Chasers.' If they'd stayed at home the Storm would have come to them. Their county lay directly in its path.

But they were fortunate that rainy night that I had kept "Old Brown." Bought new in 1986, that 3/4 Ton 250 Supercab with a couple hundred thousand miles on it from towing trailer loads of breeding stock across a dozen states, could still pull. A close relative loaded needed equipment into the bed of that aged pickup and drove to the site. By that time the chasers had flagged down a jinxed motorist who willingly drove into the mire in a fated effort to help. I mean, would you drive into wet cement? Both were pulled to the safety of the hard-surfaced highway by the old pickup and drove happily on their way flinging mud-balls to compass points. A lesson learned? Maybe. They vote.

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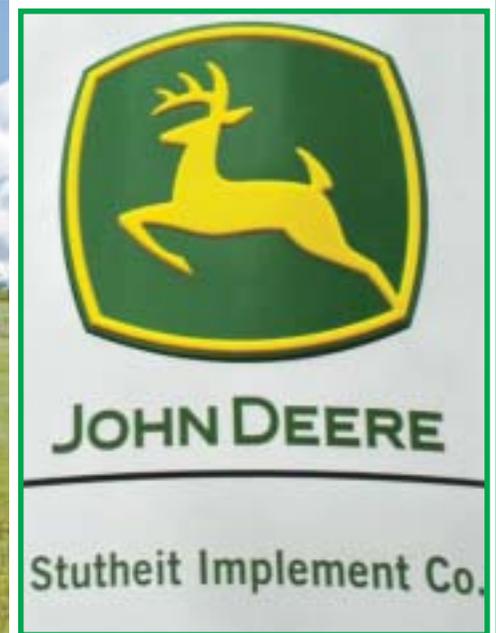
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<<<<<<<< Continued from page 5

drugs, nor will Medicare cover prescriptions purchased from Canada, or any other foreign country. Medicare will not pay for medications prescribed for anorexia, weight loss/gain, hair growth, cosmetic purposes, or fertility purposes. If a person is receiving hospice benefits, Medicare will not cover medications used to "cure" a terminal illness. [Hospice patients can elect to end hospice care and go back to treatment for terminal illness.]

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.

Resources used in preparation of this article include: *Volunteer Counselor Training and Resource Manual*, 2013, Nebraska Department of Insurance; pg. 88. *Medicare Drug Coverage Under Part A, Part B and Part D*, Department of Health & Human Services, National Medicare Training Program, CMS; April 2011.



Two visitors to my bird feeder that maybe shouldn't be there.

## Property Management

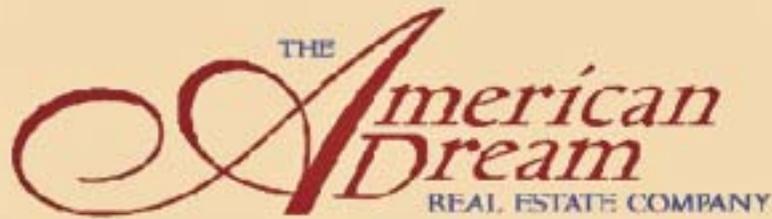
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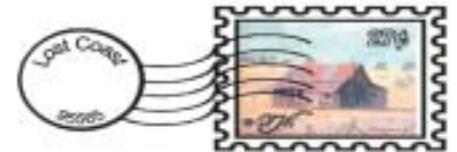


**'Red Buds' around the  
 Nemaha Courthouse**

Old Home Place  
390 Memory Lane  
Lost Coast

# "Holding on to Hope..."

By Vicki O'Neal



In 2002, I lost my beloved husband. He died of cancer near Christmastime. Not long before he went into a coma, my Soulmate said to me: "If there's any way I can send you a message from Heaven, I will do it!"

After he died, it seemed that all my hopes and dreams died with him. I felt utterly lost and alone.

To comfort me, my sister gave me a big Teddy Bear to hold in the endless nights when storms raged in my soul, and tears rained upon my pillow. The Teddy Bear was a great comfort, but eventually the Bear got lost and then I had no one—not even a Teddy.

I plodded through life, feeling drained and miserable. Needless to say, the ensuing years were difficult—a real challenge to survive.

Then, five years ago, I thought I'd found happiness again.

I'd found a new Soulmate in California...one who shared my love of the country. We both loved gardening and plants. We loved boating.... Fishing. Camping. Jogging. Beach-combing. We loved collecting shells and driftwood and rocks together.

It was the "perfect union." We suited one another perfectly and it was just meant to be! ...Everyone said so! We made many happy memories together. I wrote a lot of stories about our adventures—but then sadly, our adventures came to an end....

Like so many marriages nowadays, it ended up on the rocks.

My heart was broken once more. The same pain and loneliness that I'd endured in 2002 assailed me, again. I'd lost another Soulmate.

Feeling heartsick, I went to visit my friend, Cheryl. She's the one who always prays with me and gives me good advice. She has spiritual dreams that leave me astounded. She tells me things that she couldn't have known without Divine Inspiration.

As soon as I arrived at her house, Cheryl said: "I had a dream about you the other night. It was from the Lord."

Cheryl told me that she had seen my life being restored and reconstructed. She saw me sitting serenely in the midst of this renovation—looking peaceful and happy. Oddly enough, she said that I was arrayed from head to

toe in dark blue velvet....

Around my shoulders was a blue velvet wrap and on my head was a velvet hat of the same color!

"...Dark blue velvet?" I said dubiously. But I knew better than to argue. I'd learned from past experience that Cheryl's dreams from the Lord were never wrong, no matter how odd they may seem.

I pondered the dream, wondering what it meant. Later, it lingered in my mind as I left Cheryl's house and drove down the street.

On impulse, I stopped by my favorite Thrift Shop.

Maybe I'd just pop inside and see if I could find a dark blue velvet hat and cape! Very unlikely—but I could at

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

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Clouds gather, building along the western horizon, rising as if by magic.....hiding the sun, shading the land in welcome shadow. In the distance thunder rolls, a promising sound to folks whose lives are closely governed by Mother Nature's whims and fancies.

A man, his face weathered and creased by countless days in the sun, feels the freshening breeze caress his cheek. Raising hopeful eyes towards the rumbling sky he repeats a prayer as old as time, "Please God, let it come this way. Please. Please. Please," coaxing what can't be coaxed, sweet-talking God, willing rain to his farm, towards his needy fields and pastures.

A solitary drop falls at his feet, generating a soft sound as it plops into the powdery grey field dust.

The smidgeon of moisture disappears as quickly as it fell, a tiny round footprint the only indication of its brief existence. For some unfathomable reason it reminds the man of a period at the end of a sentence..... a conclusion, the finish of something scarcely started. He takes a deep breath, then sighs in resignation.

He's spent his last prayer on a single drop of rain.

Later, as the man finishes planting his final field a second drop splashes against the glass of his tractor's windshield..... then a third, a fourth, and a fifth, one after another in a steady pitter-pattering stream; by the time he turns into the farmyard's driveway the window is running with rivulets of water. He secures the corn drill and races for the covered porch where he stands in awe at the first real thunderstorm in over a year.

He turns his face towards heaven..... and waits.

A short time later, as sunlight burnishes the landscape with gold, the farm dogs crawl from beneath the porch where they had cowered at the first clap of thunder. Circling the man's legs, embarrassed by their cowardice, they beg forgiveness.... which the man absent-mindedly bestows with a quick pat and a gentle scratch.

And life on the farm resumes.....

From long years of experience he knows this rain will measure about a quarter of an inch, not enough to slake the land's thirst, or green-up the pastures.... but enough to fill his heart with gratitude, and rekindle the flames of hope.

And for today that's enough.

As Always,

Karen



Dogwood Blossoms

# Alzheimer's Affects Us All



## Alzheimer's and the Fear of Water

By Lee Nyberg

Feelings of fear, confusion, and embarrassment change bathing into something most everyone with Alzheimer's actively resists. The best way to handle bathing or showering is the same approach for other behavior hurdles in people with Alzheimer's: focus on the individual.

A caregiver is most effective when s/he has a connection with the person with Alzheimer's. Establishing a routine in tune with energy levels and knowing how to cajole, reward, and soothe in just the right way means stressful activities and difficult behaviors can be managed.

Bath time requires preparation, creativity, calm, and flexibility. Choose your loved one's calmest time during the day, and make bathing part of the daily routine. Before bringing the person to the bathroom, gather supplies, fresh clothes, lots of towels, and make the bathroom very warm and brightly lit. Next, invite your loved one to take a stroll around the house with you. Hold hands, letting that palm-to-palm contact soothe. Using a calm and pacifying tone, discuss mundane, unrelated subjects while you stroll, ending at the warm bathroom.

Choose from a variety of techniques, once in the bathroom. Some people say something like, "it is so nice and warm in here; it's perfect for a shower." Others bargain: "you'll look great after you bathe, and then we can go to lunch/have a brownie." Next, offer choices, such as,

"Would you like to take a bath or a shower?" and "do you want help taking off your shirt, or will you do it?" Often the best way to convince the person with Alzheimer's to take off underwear is to have her step into the bath or shower still wearing it. Once the garments are wet, she will most likely want to take them off.

If your loved one is having a bad day, try a sponge bath instead. Generally, flexibility is okay, but if your loved one is incontinent, the briefs area should be kept clean and dry to prevent skin breakdown and infection.

Support the person in doing everything they can for themselves. Many caregivers put a soapy cloth into their loved one's hand and coach the activity: "next your arms." Once assistance is required, explain what you will do, before and during the action. For example, "Now, I will wash under your arm; here we go, we're washing under your arm."

Many people with Alzheimer's fear water. For bathers, 1-3" of water in the tub is a comfortable level. Keep water from hitting the face during a shower. Reduce anxiety by moving to their level and field of vision. Any time your loved one is seated in the bathroom, even in the bath or shower itself, be on their level, looking up to make eye contact, so you don't appear to loom or threaten.

Bathing can seem to be an insurmountable task. The Alzheimer's Association has a very good guide covering lots of important detail. Support groups can supply ideas. A combination of family and professional caregivers can help you manage changing needs as your loved one's disease progresses.

Lee Nyberg seeks to help families care for loved ones with Alzheimer's through education and her company, Home Care Assistance. Home Care Assistance provides in-home senior care, helping seniors maintain their independence, dignity, and control and giving their families peace of mind. For more information, visit [www.HomeCareAssistanceLincoln.com](http://www.HomeCareAssistanceLincoln.com) or [www.HomeCareAssistanceOmaha.com](http://www.HomeCareAssistanceOmaha.com).

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

least look for a book while I was there—an inspirational book to encourage me. And maybe I could find a big Teddy Bear like the one I'd lost after my husband died. There had to be something in this store to give me hope!

I looked and looked and finally found a book entitled: "Holding on to Hope." "But I didn't find a blue velvet hat and gown, or even a Teddy Bear.

I sighed. Dark blue Velvet hats and gowns! What was I thinking? There probably wasn't anything like that for a hundred miles around.

I walked towards the front, carrying the book. As I approached the cashier counter, I suddenly stopped dead in my tracks.

A pair of dark eyes were looking at me. Teddy Bear eyes. They seemed to be watching me intently. I started to laugh. The Bear was wearing a dark blue velvet gown. On her head was a dark blue velvet hat.

Reaching for the Teddy, I cuddled her close. She fit in my arms like she belonged there. She had a card attached to her hand. I looked at it. I had no idea what to expect, but what I saw jolted me to the core. "2002," the card said. "2002 Christmas Holiday Collection."

What?!

Christmas of 2002 was when my husband had died. Was this a message of hope from Heaven? It seemed surreal.

I squinted at the words printed on the card: "Please name me," it said. "I'd like to be your friend. I'll always be with you when you are joyful or sorrowful. When you are cheerful or angry. I'll always be with you."

I looked at the Teddy Bear and she looked at me. "You're going home with me," I said. I didn't care if she cost a hundred bucks!

I walked to the cash register. When the clerk saw me carrying the Bear, she made a wry face.

"I'll sell you that bear for a dollar!" she said. "What a nuisance! I'm tired of moving her around. You have no idea how long she's been here! No one would buy her. I don't know why! She's in perfect condition."

I smiled, not saying a word. I knew why the Teddy Bear hadn't sold. She was waiting for me!

The clerk chattered on, but my mind was busy thinking. I glanced down at the bear's card: "Please name me," it said. What would be a good name for this beautiful symbol of hope and promise?

I looked at the book in my other hand. "Holding on to Hope," the title said.

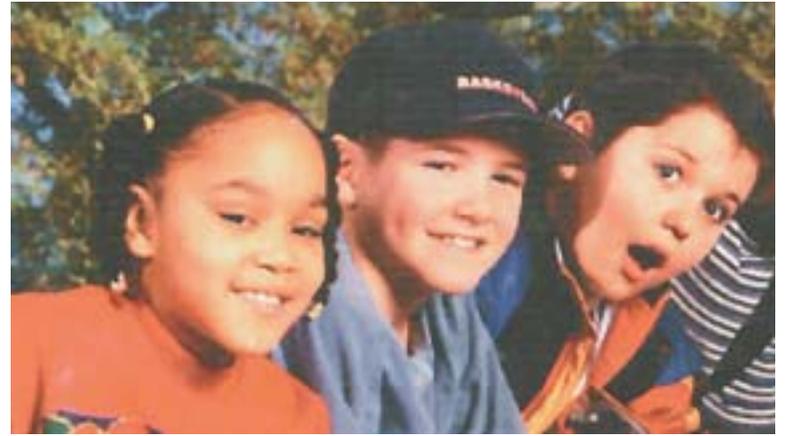
Hope?

Indeed! I was holding onto Hope—with both hands!

I smiled as I paid for my purchases. And when I walked outside with the Teddy Bear cradled in my arms, I whispered her new name:

"Hope," I murmured. "You give me hope for the future... You'll be my friend forever!"

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## Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

As I write this, I am beginning my fourth week of official retirement from gainful employment, which is not to say I suddenly have loads of time on my hands. My husband pointed out this fact with his recent (and somewhat exasperated) comment as he slaved away at ironing his own workpants, "I thought you were retired." It seems I'm just as busy without a paycheck as I was when I was still getting one.

I'm assigning most of the blame for my lack of free time since May 1 to the late-arriving spring, with its consequent compression of planting, weeding and other yard work into a two- or three-week period instead of the usual two months. The bottom line is that I have yet to take up any of the new activities I had hoped to dig into as soon as I jettisoned the bureaucratic folderol of my job. My new target date to start reinventing my life is July 1. Except that when I look at the calendar, I see that between the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday and a trip to my mother's, I'll be doing good to start my new routine by July 9 or 10.

Actually, July could go either way in terms of being conducive to establishing a new routine. While I should be caught up on household and yard tasks by then, I will have the distraction of having hubby around to contend with. He has decided that if his wife can retire, so can he, at least temporarily. (He's such a copy-cat.) He is taking an early retirement offer from his employer at the end of June, and plans to live like a real retiree for at least the month of July before getting back into the workforce. The life of leisure he has envisioned for retirement requires a somewhat larger stash of cash than we have on hand just yet. So it's back to the salt mines for him for a few more years.

Hubby's first project for July is to volunteer at the Senior Open Golf Tournament in Omaha, something he has been eagerly anticipating for several years. It would be great if he didn't have to pay hundreds of dollars for the privilege! It had better be worth it. Of course, if it turns out to be a disappointment, I'm sure he won't admit it to me, but I'll know. I pledge, however, to take the high road and not complain. One never knows when one will need to remind one's spouse of an incident in which one took the high road. *Remember when I kept my mouth shut about that \$400 you spent "volunteering" at that golf tournament? Well, it's payback time.*

OK, having ulterior motives probably disqualifies me from claiming the high road. But not complaining still gives me the right to claim payback at some future date.

In fact, I have a plan in the works myself for a new endeavor which will require spending a little cash. Stay tuned for updates.

# Poetry and Photography



## *Woman across the river*

Woman across the river waits  
pink painted toes pacing  
her green eyes glisten  
listening for the soft knock  
of his fist at the door

and she remembers  
the tender caress of his hands  
exploring under the tail  
of her blouse, of how they pretended  
to watch that old western

their fingers crocheted together  
those long soft kisses creating weather  
and how they finally yielded  
to the encroaching storm

when his long body poured  
across her curves like sheets  
of warm August rain and after  
how she nested against him  
their two bodies shining  
in the fragrance of leaves.



## **Brown Bag Johnny**

When I'm ready to dine out  
for the first time in forever,  
don't feed me peanut butter  
and saltines.

I want a nice juicy cut of beef,  
the kind that makes you salivate,  
just hearing that first sizzle.

Don't set brown bag Johnny  
at my table; offer me a cold sandwich  
and a limp handshake.

Thanks but, I think I'll pass.  
I need someone with a little more  
spice, a little more cayenne.

I'm also not interested in  
fancy food like escargot,  
baked Alaska, crepe suzette  
But give me something  
with more life than apple jelly  
on burnt soggy  
white bread toast.

So next time,  
that first time,  
pour me an ice cold beer;  
cut me a nice thick ribeye;  
season and sear the outside.  
Keep the middle, that warm heart,  
sweet juicy pink and  
make my mouth water.

## **Mirage**

Like a gypsy moth to  
a flickering flame  
I'm drawn to  
your skin.

My mercury rising,  
our bodies collide as  
your secret unveils.

Goosebumps freckle  
my flesh for  
under your silky heat  
lurks permafrost.

How can ice flow  
beneath something  
so warm?



by Carol Carpenter



Bird Identification, Page 2



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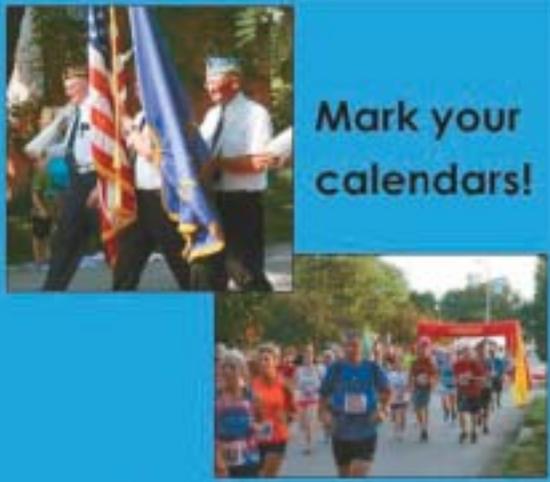


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