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June 2014

A Magazine for Small-Town America

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White Egret, May, 2014
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Mound City



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Voices from the Valleys of the Nemaha

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COVER PHOTO

This beautiful White Egret was one of several migrating through the Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge near Mound City. Some usually remain all Summer.

I've had multiple reports of Oriole sightings in Peru, including 'Garden Orioles (page 9). And a new visitor in my yard was the Summer Tanager (Page 9). It was entertaining to watch Mrs. Robin feeding her babies and chasing the squirrels away. This morning I witnessed the first flight of one of her chicks (Page 7).

I plan to upload more wildlife images to my new website;
www.stephenhasslerphotography.com Check it now and then for new 'entries'.

Have a great June, and thank you for picking up *Your Country Neighbor*!!

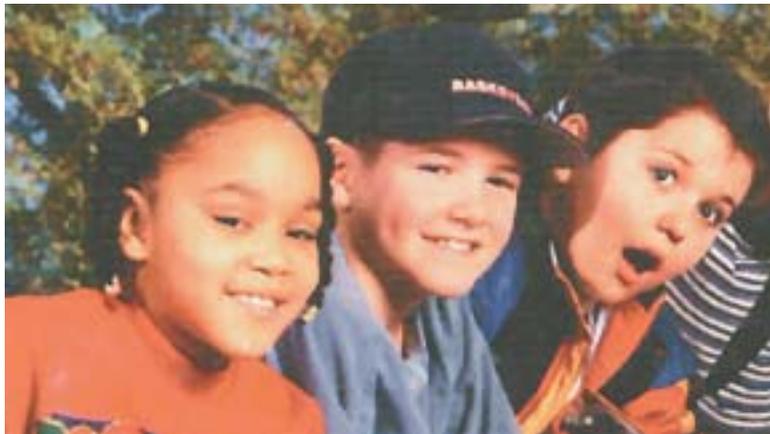
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Poetry by Devon Adams

I'M OVER HERE

In the soft wind of
a summer morning,
an echo bounces
from all directions.
Two tones, repeated,
give evidence that an
oriole is hanging out
in the local trees. Then
comes the lovely aria.
But hearing is easier
than seeing him, as
he flashes from one
branch to another, his
coat of silk tangerine
bright as a neon sign.

GOING AWAY

It's hard to say goodbye
to someone who is looking
in your eyes and holding
your hand. She is smiling
because you're here, but
she doesn't know that you
know her. You are sisters,
and she remembers the
children that still play in
the dusty past, but the old
masks that have changed
us, baffle and confuse her.
In fact, she doesn't know
the person in the mirror who
looks back at herself. For
sometime now, she has been
going away from the person
she used to be, and she can't
turn around. So, instead of
saying goodbye to the sister
you knew, try saying hello to
the person she is today.

BABY STARS

Like a brand new star
spinning out of the dust
of a galaxy, the bright
young life has a glow
that calls attention to
itself. All the older folks
are drawn into his orbit
by the power of his sparkling
eyes, his enchanting smile
and the delightful gurgles
and giggles that emanate
from his busy baby body.
But his mother is locked
into an adoration for him
that has changed her life.
Her heart will forever be
part of his heart, even past
the gates of eternity.

POTTED

They sit above
the lowly grass
and wave their
velvet petals from
an elevated planter.
Such haughty blooms
are pampered every
day, with everything
they need for being
beautiful. Life is easy
in a sphere above the
jungle on the ground,
and glamour glows in
easy waves. But fancy
isn't all there is to life.
The bright dandelion is
shining like a sun chip,
fallen from beyond the
blue silk sky.

PENCIL PORTRAITS - PERSON OR ANIMAL

(Sizes given are the mat size)

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Send your photo to me, Devon Adams
P.O. 192, Peru, Nebraska 68421

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E-MAIL: buckskinz@windstream.net



Where Life Is Good

Marilyn Woerth

Hey it's June and summer is finally here. How many plants, shrubs and trees have you lost so far from this year's devastating winter of extreme winds, cold and drought? The people in the know are saying it is this year's winter drought and drying winds that have caused the most damage, not the cold.

My four year old crape myrtle is not showing any signs of budding, but I may give it a week or two more as the stems aren't totally brittle. A David Austin rose, "Queen of Sweden" (pink), looked headed for the compost pile, but a friend spotted a few leaves at the bottom. Halleluiaah, for it is one of our favorites.

Several friends have complained about losing mature redbud trees. Another friend reminded us that recently redbud trees have been taken out of their natural element. Redbuds are an understory tree, in other words, they need to have larger trees around them to protect them. Home owners and landscape developers have been placing them out in the open, a sure way to doom this tree. Mine are in their natural habitat in our woodlands and are doing just fine.

Evergreens have taken the biggest hit due to wind decimation. I have a holly and an arborvitae that are looking a bit scorched. I admit I only went out once during the winter season to spray them with an anti-desiccant. What is an anti-desiccant you ask? You're not the first to ask that question. It is a spray that helps plants retain moisture. It is usually used around the beginning of December and once a month thereafter until the warm, calmer spring weather returns. It is beneficial on hollies, azaleas, rhododendrons, boxwoods, conifers, and the tender stems of roses and hydrangeas. But don't use it on waxy blue conifers they have a natural coating system. Spray them on windless, 40-50 degree days. There are other times this product can be used, i.e. during the summer if you are transplanting a specimen on a hot July day you might want to spray it to help it retain its moisture level.

Well enough talk about dreadful winter weather and its consequences. I am looking forward to the Fourth of July and the wonderful Freedom Day Celebration in the village of Brownville, NE. Of course I am partial; I am on the Freedom Day Celebration committee, and hubby and I are in charge of the parade. Zowie, what a full day of activities do we have in store for you and your family (7 AM-?). There is definitely a little bit of something for everyone. Please check out the schedule at:

<http://www.brownville-ne.com/4th-of-july-freedom-celebration.html>

You all come and join the fun where life is historically, patriotically good. Huzzah!



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Mrs. Robin and 'baby' just out of the nest.

Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

Aaahh. The joy of sleeping with the windows open, on sheets line-dried in the fresh air, listening to the gurgling of the waterfall in our backyard pond. The late spring kept us from our warm-weather sleeping habit until well into April this year. We were thrilled when we could finally crack the bedroom window open and enjoy the night sounds. But wait, what was that rasping? It wasn't hubby snoring. It was too early in the season for crickets or the 17-year cicadas we're due for later this summer.

Apparently frogs, or possibly toads, were enjoying our pond, too. And they were enjoying it a little too much, if you ask me. I assumed they were seeking mates. What else could inspire their incessant croaking? They certainly had resilient vocal chords. Since we could do nothing to stop them, we opted to pretend that we were camping out and that we actually enjoyed their chorus. And in a couple of weeks, we got more-or-less used to it.

Then, one morning, hubby asked, "Did you hear that noise last night?" I replied in the negative. "How could you not hear it? At midnight, there was some kind of bird – must have been an owl – making a heck of a racket. It went on for 20 minutes!"

I questioned hubby's claim of a 20-minute hullabaloo, not believing that I could actually sleep through it. (Mind you, this is the same hubby who slept through every night-time feeding that I got up for when our children were babies.) But he insisted that it went on that long, and that it was so loud, it sounded like it was right outside the window.

The next day, he reported the same occurrence, at exactly the same time, and I had exactly the same response: I didn't hear a thing. *Could I be going deaf? Could hubby be having a recurring nightmare?*

He was so astounded that I had slept through it two nights in a row, that I gave him permission to wake me up if it happened again. Sure enough, at the stroke of midnight, the cacophony began. Hubby elbowed me, "Do you hear that?" I heard it all right. Hubby was out of bed in an instant, on a mission to discover the explanation. He strode toward the window, and then it dawned on him: the radio/CD player in the adjoining bathroom contained a bird song CD that I had been listening to a few days earlier. Somehow I had inadvertently turned on the alarm feature, which was set to the default of midnight.

The mystery was solved. I thought it was hilarious, but hubby was not so amused at having his sleep disturbed three nights running. He gets up before 5:00 a.m., so it's understandable that he would be a tad cranky about it.

We haven't had any more unpleasant sleep disturbances since the CD incident. But last night I did hear the quiet "hoo"ing of a real Great Horned Owl from its perch in one of the big old trees south of our house. It was a lovely sound; I look forward to hearing its soothing cadence through my open window for many more nights to come.

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Alzheimer's Affects Us All



Wandering: When "Here" Is Not Where Your Person With Alzheimer's Wants To Be

By Lee Nyberg

"He was here 10 minutes ago." For 60% of people with dementia, wandering goes hand in glove with declining cognitive ability.

Reasons for wandering, or elopement, are individual and may change over time. A person may wander because he fails to recognize his surroundings as "home," may be trying to meet a basic need, such as finding a restroom, may be reliving the past, may be bored or restless, or may be seeking to escape an over-stimulating environment, such as a crowded store.

Caregivers are only human. They cannot watch their loved one for 24 hours a day, or prevent wandering, even if all the doors have alarms and locks. A proactive approach to wandering reduces its likelihood. Create a daily routine of activity and exercise to reduce boredom and support night-time sleep. Learn the triggers by analyzing your loved one's past life and present behavior. For example, a former office worker may be trying to go home every evening, just as he did for 40 years. Minimize visual triggers; store car keys and outdoor clothing out of sight. Disguise doors to the outside with paint or draperies or hang a mirror or stop sign on the door. Install locks on doors out of sight lines. Identify bathroom doors with descriptive photos.

Be ready for elopement. Register your loved one with dementia with Medic Alert®/Alzheimer's Association Safe Return®, a nationwide identification program and make certain she wears the accompanying bracelet. Put name and address labels inside clothing. Consider radio frequency track-able shoes. Enlist neighbors to notify you if they see your loved one alone outside.

Know how to distract your loved one from the impulse of wandering. The Mayo Clinic suggests the following redirection technique:

1. Acknowledge the person's emotional state; "You look worried."
2. Join their reality; "You're looking for your children? I'm looking for something, too."
3. Establish a common goal; "Let's look together, over there, in the other room." With your body to the side of the person with AD, lightly touch his arm and guide him away from the door or window and towards an activity, such as folding laundry or sorting a jumbled toolbox.

Wandering people with AD do not come back on their own. The Alzheimer's Association recommends immediate action when a person has wandered:

- Call the Alzheimer's Association Safe Return number: 800-625-3780.
- Alert neighbors and search the nearby area. Most wanderers stick to roads and sidewalks within a 1.5-5 mile radius.
- Call out the person's name, not their role (i.e., Tom, not "Dad") as they may not remember their "dad" role.
- If unsuccessful after 15 minutes, call 911 and say a "vulnerable adult" is missing, then file a missing person's report.

Doing the best you can, as a caregiver, means using all available tools. Teepa Snow, a highly respected caregiver trainer, stresses working with the cognitive ability the person has left and not what we wish they had. Instead of trying to retrain a person with dementia, proactively manage the environment, be aware of his or her former life and habits, and know what to do in case of wandering.

Lee Nyberg serves seniors through her company, Home Care Assistance. Home Care Assistance is North America's premier provider of in-home senior care. Our mission is to change the way the world ages. We provide older adults with a higher class of care that enables them to live happier, healthier lives at home, even with significant health issues. Our services are distinguished by the caliber of our caregivers, the responsiveness of our staff and our expertise in Live-In Care. We embrace a positive, balanced approach to aging centered on the evolving needs of older adults. For more information, please visit our website: HomeCareAssistanceLincoln.com or call 402-763-9140 to talk to a Care Manager.

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Tell me Detroit
what you were thinking
in August of 1968
in the relentless summer heat
cops raiding that party
Vietnam vet returning home?

Tell me Detroit
do you still bear the scars
of that burning
of those wounded and dead
your belly full of hate?

Tell me Detroit
in this great city
of glass, concrete and steel
this city of dying neighborhoods
has all hope abandoned you?

Tell me Detroit
why those six men beat Steve Utash
and stole his money and credit cards
after the accident when he tried
to help the boy, David Harris,
who stepped off the curb
in front of his truck.

Tell me Detroit
I want to understand
my old hometown
with our proud heritage
our Beirut-like neighborhoods
is this the new face of our city?
a city starved for heroes
festering once again
in its own rage.



Woodpecker sneaking a sip from the hummingbird feeder.

The Future is Now

They promised men on the moon
and flying cars.

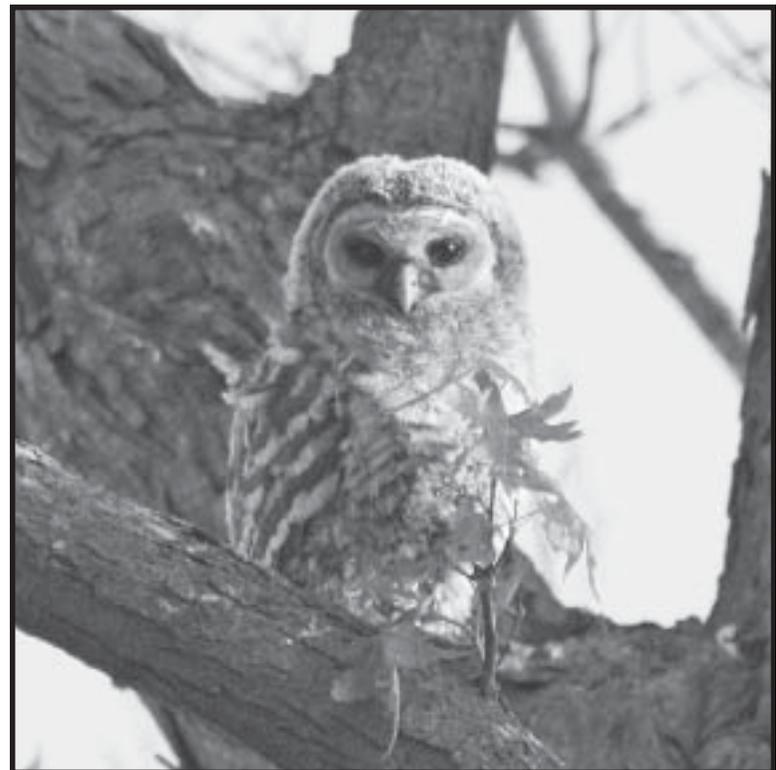
They told us to hide under our desks
put tin foil on the car windows
and we'd be safe from the radiation.

They gave us Lost in Space and Star Trek
robots and androids
alien planets and transporters
zipping our molecules across
thousands of miles to planets and galaxies.

Martians landed and some were friendly;
they gave us Star Wars with light sabers
holographic projections, travel at light speed.

So if the future is now,
if we can, in fact,
"boldly go where no man has gone before,"
why can't I, in the blink of an eye,
get across Kansas, Montana or Nebraska;
why can't I transport from here to there
in a high speed vacuum tube or
a contraption of scrambled molecules.

What I really want to know is,
if the future is now,
where in the hell is
my flying car?!



Barred Owl Chick.

by Carol Carpenter



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